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CONFLICT OF IDEOLOGIES

J. D. MABBOTT, M.A.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Harriman Report on United States aid to Europe included the following passage:

"We all know that we are faced in the world to-day with two conflicting ideologies. One is a system in which individual rights and liberties are maintained. The opposing system is one where iron discipline by the State ruthlessly stamps out individual liberties and obliterates all opposition."

This picture of international relations has been kept steadily before our eyes in recent months. Indeed the question seems no longer whether there is such a conflict but whether or how soon it will lead to war. In such circumstances, political philosophers must have read with special interest Mr. T. D. Weldon's recent work, *States and Morals*, in which he shows how the basic political differences between States rest on divergent moral beliefs. It would appear that differences of ideology, of moral standards or values, are the main causes of our present unrest and threaten, as nothing else does, the peace of the world. This is the thesis I wish to examine.

ILLUSTRATION FROM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

It may help to clear the issues if we consider how far divergences of moral standards contribute to personal conflicts in private life; and then (reversing Plato's order) proceed from the small and familiar letters of private conduct to the larger and less familiar

letters of international affairs. There are four types of personal conflict to be distinguished here.

(i) Personal conflicts are usually due to immoral actions; that is, to the fact that one party or both do not live up to their own moral standards. Theft, assault, blackmail, bribery—these are usually committed by people who are well aware that they ought not to commit them.

(ii) Personal conflicts are often due to non-moral (not to immoral) action. They arise when the motives of the parties are neither moral nor immoral. Competition, the struggle for existence, the duel between two suitors for a lady's hand, the crushing of an economic rival, the cutting down of a wage rate, the pressure to push it up; these are all cases in which the combatants do not think of themselves as breaking moral laws in their actions. Nor, however, do they think of themselves as upholding or crusading for moral codes. They accept neither praise nor blame, whether they succeed or whether they fail.

(iii) Personal conflicts sometimes arise because both contestants accept the same moral standard, but the standard itself is such as to bring them into conflict. Two fathers each unselfishly striving for the good of his own family may thus clash; or two headmasters each loyally upholding the claims of his own school to some contested field or building or endowment. Such contestants would usually be proudly conscious of their own moral rectitude, and claim moral credit for such a struggle or for success in it.

(iv) Finally there are a few personal conflicts which are due to differences between the moral codes of the parties. Examples may be seen when a disciplinarian father and a libertarian mother come to loggerheads about bringing up their children, or where a man with a strong sense of truth or justice tries to achieve these ends at all costs, while a colleague of his, more sensitive to suffering or more appreciative of peace, tries to stop him.

The great majority of personal conflicts fall in the first two classes. They are due to immoral or to non-moral action. The moral standards of the disputants do not help to cause them. In the few cases where moral standards cause the trouble they come in by two different routes. The disputants may have the same moral standard, but the standard may be such as to bring about conflict. Or they may have different moral standards and the difference is the cause.

The Types of International Conflict

There are two reasons why international conflicts are more likely to involve moral standards than personal conflicts are. Most personal conflicts involve direct contact, and people in direct contact have

usually grown up in the same social setting and tend therefore to agree in their moral standards. But States are less likely to share the same moral standards. Moreover, individuals may frequently act immorally. But a government has to try to get its own people behind it for any conflict, and it is not easy for it to do this in support of any action which violates the moral standards of the people in question. It is rare, therefore, that peace is threatened by overtly immoral action. In the second type of conflict the disputes were due to non-moral factors. In the international field this may certainly occur. Economic forces such as starvation, population pressure, competition for markets may generate disagreement. With these causes of conflict I am not concerned in this paper. On the whole it seems unlikely that such factors should lead to war without the additional backing of some moral or ideological element. This leaves the last two classes of conflict distinguished in the previous section. So now the problem can be stated more clearly. It is to be divided into two problems. (i) Is there any moral belief whose adoption by one or more States is liable to threaten peace? (ii) Are there any cases in which differences of moral belief are liable to threaten peace?

Moral Beliefs Which Endanger Peace

No belief can endanger peace unless it is adopted by a government as a basis of national policy and supported by the people living under that government. There are some peculiar moral beliefs (such as vegetarianism when it rests on moral grounds) which are not likely to be so adopted. There seems indeed to be only one moral belief which in its own intrinsic character threatens peace and which is liable to be adopted as a basis of governmental policy. That belief is exclusive nationalism. It is the belief of a government or people in the intrinsic superiority of that people, with the corollary that the interests of that people form the only or the paramount claim upon them. It cannot be denied that the interest of one's fellow-citizens constitutes *a* moral claim on a citizen and an even stronger moral claim on a government. It is not the recognition of this claim which is the danger, but its expansion to include all morality or to eliminate or overide all other moral claims. "My country right or wrong" is the slogan of this creed. So far as Nazism appealed to anything moral in its followers this was its appeal. The corollaries were clearly drawn. The two pillars of western morality might be said to be pity and justice. Hans Frank on different occasions defined them both. "Justice is whatever benefits the German people, injustice whatever harms them." And again, "As a matter of principle we shall have pity for the German people and for no one else in the world." Himmler said to the German generals on the eve of the Russian campaign,

"What happens to a Russian or a Czech does not interest me in the slightest . . . Whether these nations live in prosperity or starve to death, interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves for our *Kultur*. Whether ten thousand Russian females fall down dead from exhaustion while digging an anti-tank ditch, interests me only in so far as the anti-tank ditch for Germany is finished."

It may be questioned whether this is a moral theory. It was no doubt often a mask for brutal sadism or for the lust for power. But it certainly is a moral theory, and unless it could have been presented as such to the German people its chances of success would have been greatly lessened. "Sacrifice all for Germany" is a moral principle determining what acts are to be held right and what wrong, what states of affairs deemed good and what bad.

Nationalism in this extreme form does not seem at present to be an acute danger. But there are factors in the present situation which may revive it. In a world of shortages and dislocation, governments are being increasingly drawn into the economic field. This tendency is an inevitable one, though it may be reinforced and intensified by positive socialistic ideals. For only inclusive territorial units can exercise on their members the compulsion necessary to carry out a rationing scheme, to impose quotas on imports, or to implement credit agreements. This means that the State is increasingly looked upon by people as the unit of economic life, and other States are regarded as units important to me either as hostile or as helpful to my own well-being. For this reason economic co-operation between States, desirable enough on economic grounds, is also a salutary counter-weight to the tendency of the ordinary man to picture the world as consisting of national units which are either helping his country for their own ulterior purposes or are bent on its destruction.

Nationalism, then, seems to be the one ideology which in its own nature threatens international peace. It is to be noticed that the threat is accentuated when the number of addicts increases. If our enemies had won the war, there would then have been two states (or perhaps three, including Italy) equally devoted to the creed of expanding and aggressive nationalism. It is obvious that their agreement on moral principle would have been inclined to make conflict between them more rather than less likely.

Moral Differences Which Endanger Peace

Here the obvious example would seem to be the opposition between communism and the ideology of the western democracies. There are two questions. Is this a *moral* conflict? Are the ideologies such as inevitably to lead to conflict or even to war? Mr. Weldon, in his book

States and Morals, maintains that all basic political differences are really moral differences. He draws from this some important corollaries. It is no use arguing with the upholder of a rival political system. No one ever changed his fundamental moral convictions as a result of argument. It is no use being morally indignant with him, for he is (like a conscientious objector) standing by moral convictions of his own and as conscious of his rectitude as you are of yours. It is no use trying to sell him your political system or to impose it upon him by constitutional machinery, for his moral standards will always reject it or operate to prevent it from working effectively. It is no use trying to co-operate with him in any organized international association, for the aims and methods of political action of the two rivals could never be harmonized within a single system. Mr. Weldon, moreover, holds in moral philosophy the doctrine that there is no absolute or objective standard of moral value. From this additional (if dubious) doctrine more political corollaries follow. Since no moral principle is inherently superior to any other moral principle, no political ideology is right and the others wrong. I said above that you could not argue anyone out of his political creed because that would mean arguing him out of his moral convictions, which is impossible. But you might hope that he would nevertheless change his moral convictions by "conversion" and that you might work to bring this about by "re-education." This will not do, for words such as "conversion" and "re-education" suggest an awakening to truth, and the claims this implies are unjustified if all moral attitudes are equally defensible. The only grounds for such efforts would be the aim of having a more comfortable neighbour or a more reliable ally.

The practical applications of these conclusions is striking. They explain why the conflict between east and west seems so intractable. We ought to realize that it is no good evincing moral disapproval of Soviet policy. We must just agree to differ. Nor should we try to impose our conception of democracy on Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, unless we are sure that the peoples of those countries hold the moral beliefs appropriate to that conception. This is sometimes put in the form "Bulgaria is not yet ready for democracy." But on Mr. Weldon's view this expression indicates spiritual pride. It suggests that our sort of system is the political expression of a correct (or mature or developed or civilized) moral attitude, while the present political methods of the Bulgarians rest on moral attitudes which are low or backward or barbarian. "Bulgarians are not ready for democracy." One might as well say "Bulgarians are not yet ready for rough cider." No wonder the United Nations Organization has failed. For both in its aims (the four freedoms, world-revolution) and in its methods of work (discussion, the veto, the rights of small nations) any world organization would be bound to split on such basic moral

issues. Many observers of the international scene must surely see in these corollaries drawn from a general theory a vivid description of actual fact. Indeed the cap fits so well that the theory is greatly confirmed by this correspondence with fact.

The Ideology of the Soviet Union

What is the basic political theory of the U.S.S.R.? Mr. Weldon says it is the Organic Theory of the State. On that theory, the State is more important than the individual. Individuals are instruments or organs only; their acts are to be morally judged and their lives used in State service. No other service counts. The citizen or government of the State has no obligations towards the citizens of other States. He must treat them, too, as tools or instruments for the good of his own State (since all his acts are to be judged by that standard). Now there is much in internal Soviet policy which suggests this view. Soviet authorities (military or political) show a marked indifference to individual lives and a ruthless vigour in pressing home the State's needs and interests. Similarly in international affairs the impression grows that Russian interests are held by Soviet statesmen to override all other obligations and to justify any action. Mr. Weldon sees no difference between the ideologies of Nazi Germany and of the Soviet Union. "Germany first; Germans nowhere. Germany first, other States nowhere." Substitute "Russia" for "Germany" and you have the Soviet creed.

This analysis is open to doubt. It may be questioned whether Germany or Russia has exemplified the Organic Theory. In Nazi Germany the State was an instrument for the triumph and supremacy of the German race. It was not an end in itself. The basic creed of Germany was the *Herrenvolk*, or Master-Race doctrine. Hitler was primarily Führer of the German people—of Germans everywhere, in the Sudetenland, in Roumania, in the Argentine, in the United States—and only secondarily Head of the German State. "Führer and Chancellor"—the order is significant.

Now there are very great similarities between the Nazi State and the Soviet Union: the organization and the special position of "the Party," the elimination of other parties, the secret police, the propaganda machine, the censorship, the purges, etc. This is natural, for Hitler copied much from the Soviet Union. But all these are resemblances in the ways in which power is organized, retained, increased, and applied. The basic difference lies in the ends to which power is directed. In Germany the end was the unification and the world-domination of the German race. There is no such creed in Russia. No doubt during the recent war it was convenient to appeal to memories of Russia's national heroes. But neither the Russian

leaders nor the Russian people suffer from *Herrenvolk* delusions. They often have a deep sense of being Russian, but this does not lead them to persecution of non-Russian minorities at home, nor to the enslavement of non-Russian peoples abroad, in the name of the intrinsic moral and cultural superiority of their own race.

If, in Russia, the State is not an end in itself, what is the end to which Russian State action is directed? The obvious answer is communism. Let us suppose this is the correct answer. The next question is this: Is communism in its own nature essentially a threat to peace, as the *Herrenvolk* doctrine and the *Lebensraum* (Living-space) doctrine of the Nazis certainly were? Communism is primarily an economic theory of the control of the means of production. It is not necessarily or intrinsically a force for international aggression. There are, however, two possible developments which might make it appear to be so.

First, there is the possibility that a government might adopt communism as its religion and regard itself as having a mission to convert the world. Christianity is not intrinsically a doctrine of war and aggression. But when a government regards itself as having a duty to spread Christianity by political methods—by force and fear—then you get Crusades. In the early days of the Soviet Union there were signs that this crusading spirit lay behind Soviet policy. It was the view of the "Westerners"—the group of returned exiles of whom Lenin and later Trotsky were the leaders—that Soviet Communism was principally of importance as the precursor and spearhead of World Revolution. This group was completely eliminated by purge or exile; Stalin, under the banner of "Socialism in a single State," won the day. It is true that there are three different explanations of Stalin's policy at that time. One is that he really believed in his slogan—that he was then and always has been primarily interested in Soviet communism and has no crusading zeal for communism outside the Union. The second is that he was just as earnest a crusader as Lenin or Trotsky, and that his slogan was only a matter of tactics. World revolution remained the goal, but the revolution must be secured in Russia first. Russia could not afford to go crusading until her own conversion was a securely accomplished fact. The third explanation is that the Stalin–Trotsky battle was a straightforward power-conflict, like the similar battle which ended in the Roehm purge in Germany. Neither side cared about communism except as a means to power, and the two slogans were pure "window-dressing." It is obvious that the choice between these three theories will affect our view of the world as a scene of conflict between rival ideologies. But in all three cases it is clear that communism is a threat to world peace, if it is so, only because the Soviet Government have decided that it shall be so, and not because

of anything in the communist creed itself. Christians do not now believe that their government has a duty to propagate Christianity by political methods throughout the world. There is no reason why any communist should believe this of communism.

There are, however, two routes by which communism might lead to aggression. It is always tempting for a government to try to heighten the loyalty of its subjects and increase the spirit of unity in its country by the use of some non-political faith as a rallying point and a driving force in its own support. It is also always tempting for a government, beset by difficulties at home and compelled to keep its people under rigid and brutal controls, to provide them with foreign conquests to keep them quiet. On this interpretation of Soviet policy, the Soviet leaders are using the communist crusade as a piece of political tactics. The second line of development is this. A communist might hold that communism in a single State is insecure because such a State will always be open to attack from the ring of capitalist States which would encircle it. Communism itself would be a peaceful and non-aggressive creed, if it were not constantly menaced by crusading and aggressive capitalist States bent on its destruction. The annexation of border territories, the erection of puppet-governments in neighbouring States, the support of communist parties abroad, all these would then be security measures dictated by fear.

I do not attempt to judge between these various guesses at the Russian enigma. What I am interested in is the connection between them and the picture of the ideological conflict from which I started. It may be said that the choice makes no practical difference. On the crusading view of Soviet policy, the Comintern was and the Cominform will be the official Soviet instrument for world-revolution. Its support would be a first priority in Russian policy. Its aim would be to spread communism, to train leaders who would preach and finally practise communism in their own countries. On the security view, the Comintern was and the Cominform will be an instrument of Soviet pressure, a tool for weakening foreign States, for espionage, and for the furtherance of Soviet interests. But on either view the Comintern was and the Cominform will be an attack on national sovereignty or even a school for traitors. What difference does it make? Again, on the crusading view, the Soviet Union set up puppet communist governments in Poland and Roumania because communism is the true religion and its triumph the goal of Soviet policy. On the security view, she set up these régimes so as to have a buffer or "glacis" against future attacks, so that any invader would have to fight his way through a thousand miles of alien territory before he violated Russian soil, so that his fighter-bases would be beyond reach of Soviet towns and aerodromes. But, again, what does it

matter? Poland and Roumania had to swallow their communist pill either way. But it does matter. For if the motive is crusading communism, it is a genuine ideology—something with which no compromise is possible. Wherever it halts, it fails. But if the Soviet quest is one for power and security, we may expect it to advance here and retreat there with a realist recognition of the forces against it.

The Ideology of the Western Democracies

The two natural claimants for the title of "Ideology of the West" are Christianity and Democracy. First, Christianity. Communism would seem to be its irreconcilable rival and both appear to be positive religious forces. For various reasons it is not easy to see the struggle in these terms. It is true that communism both in Marxist theory and in practice has been anti-Christian. But there are obvious historical reasons for this. The Christian Churches in Europe have, more often than not, been conservative in character; and in many cases they have been active political opponents of left-wing parties. In Russia, in particular, the Church was closely identified with the Czarist régime. But there is nothing in the basic aims of communism which is anti-Christian. There is nothing anti-Christian about collective farms, the control of factories by workers' councils, the collective ownership of the means of production, or the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." There is a parallel here in the Marxist theory of the State. Marx's definition of the State as the instrument for exploitation of the workers was partly provoked by the behaviour of the actual governments of his own day. But the doctrine that, with the disappearance of classes, the State would wither away is obviously bound to be scrapped as soon as communism captures the State machine. The anti-State features of Marxism then are an historical accident; it seems possible that the anti-religious features are an historical accident also.

But, it may be objected, communism is anti-Christian because it is materialist and because it requires from its supporters a fanatical devotion beside which no other religion could possibly live. Here also, I think, are historical accidents. The materialism of communism, deeply rooted as it is in official text-books, seems to be a purely accidental excrescence. This Marxist view of history, of science, and of the world is a piece of dated and unconvincing dialectic which even communists might well come to regard as any philosopher now regards the dialectic of Hegel, to which Marx owed so much, as a museum-piece and an historical curio. The fanatical devotion to communism seems also curiously démodé in Russia. A revolutionary creed which has to make its way in the world may be well advised

to require of its handful of early believers that they should be communists first, last and all the time; but when communism is in full control of a State it is not only unnecessary but impossible to maintain its status as an all-devouring Moloch and a fanatical faith. In Russia only the Party (subject to constant purges and reductions in number) is supposed to make this high demand. It is the priesthood—faith absorbed and single-minded. And even in the Party it is obvious that there must be many members wholly absorbed in some technical or administrative task. When your faith is the *status quo* it is not easy to go on being fanatical about it. And, as for the ninety-nine per cent of the population who are not members of the Party, there is not even a pretence that they need be fanatical communists. Thus the opposition between communism and any other religion is weakened also. In fact it would not surprise me to find developing a Christian communism claiming for this economic and political creed (as has been claimed for so many others and sometimes with less plausibility) the authority of Christ himself.

Looked at from our side of the curtain, too, Christianity does not seem a good candidate for the place of protagonist. Christianity is a spiritual faith. When it has descended into the political arena and become (or backed) a single political party it has always suffered degradation. This is equally true on the international plane. Christian spy services, Christian naval bases, a Christian monopoly of the atomic bomb, Christian dollars for Turkey, Christian tanks for Greece: these features of western political action are necessary and desirable but they do not look comfortable under that banner. (While many people here recognized the necessity and effectiveness of the intensive bombing of German towns, many among them also felt uneasy when they heard this policy preached from pulpits or backed by Bishops.) The selection of Christianity as the ideology to be set against communism also weakens the anti-communist forces. For under which banner should Arabs or Indians or Chinese be enrolled? Even our present support of Turkey against Soviet aggression looks a little odd if it is regarded as a blow for Christianity.

The usual alternative ideology is democracy. But a form of government does not seem to be the sort of thing that could serve as a creed. Moreover democracy can be claimed by all sides and with some justice everywhere. If we try to define it or to look for the special features we think particularly democratic, we shall find difficulty in regarding them as more than means to ends. Plebiscites, referendums, elections, many-party systems, the majority principle—all these look like machinery not like supreme moral values. (This is true also of dictatorship, which was once regarded as the opposite of democracy. Dictatorship, too, is no ideology. Any threat it presents

to peace lies not in dictatorship itself but in the policy a given dictator adopts. It is no doubt true that Franco's government in Spain was put into power by foreign aggression and is maintained in power by oppression and terror. But the original resolution on Spain passed by the United Nation's Organization—that Franco's government is at present a threat to world peace—was absurd. Even more absurd would be the view that it was such a threat because it was a dictatorship. For on that view the Salazar government in Portugal must be a threat to world peace also.) Thus I cannot see in democracy an ideology or a moral creed which can serve as a bulwark against communism or Soviet hegemony. An added reason for rejecting democracy as our basic and central faith is that all the processes we call democratic could be used to destroy those values which, as I shall show below, I regard as the essential features of our way of life.

Perhaps our question is unnecessary. No single ideology is required. It suffices that we all reject communism or Soviet hegemony. Similarly it was sufficient that our late allies should agree with us in disliking the prospect of German domination; and events have shown that this was indeed all that we were agreed about; for as soon as we came to devise those positive policies which Germany's defeat made necessary we could agree on nothing at all. It does not need two ideologies to make a war. One is enough, provided that it is sufficiently aggressive and sufficiently objectionable. So perhaps we have no western ideology and need none.

Yet, it would be said, this will weaken our position. How can we attract allies if we have no positive aims to put before them? How can we call for sacrifice and loyalty if we can provide no idols to worship? Many critics could say that what we lack is a single dynamic creed, comparable to fascism and communism, a creed to whose acceptance all our children can be educated, to whose service all our young people can be dedicated, something to bind us together into a single living unit, to close our ranks and direct our march. How very tempting it all sounds! But in fact it is a sign of our political maturity that we have no such single political faith to dominate our lives.

Yet, among the many things that we value, we can count some which go unrecognized beyond the curtain. We recognize the intrinsic value of knowledge and of beauty, while elsewhere art is propaganda and truth must toe the party line. We see that these things can only survive if their adherents are left free; so we use repression of opinion and censorship of art with regret and sparingly and never as an instrument of positive policy. We have a special regard for the dignity and value of individual personality. The Russians must be genuinely puzzled about our reactions to the question of the "Soviet

wives." They would agree with Stalin that a matter concerning fifteen citizens is settled at a very low administrative level. Stalin thinks in millions. Why should not Mr. Bevin do so too? They would be equally astonished at the Archer Shee case (dramatized recently in *The Winslow Boy*). That the highest legal authorities in the land should be invoked, that Parliament should turn aside from the disposal of millions of pounds and the fate of millions of people to spend hours discussing the question whether a small boy was justly or unjustly expelled from his school—this would seem another of those English lunacies in which we suddenly lose all sense of proportion. The Russian could sympathize with the French critic who read on a Piccadilly poster "Disaster to England," and rushed to buy a paper, only to find that Hobbs was out for a duck.

The values we prize (which all together may be called Liberty or, better, Liberties) come as near as we can get to a political ideology. But they form no single creed nor even any very coherent pattern. We constantly have to adjust them one against another and all of them against the welfare of the people. Thus they do not form an ideology which can unify a nation; still less can they act as a positive and dynamic inspiration to a government. For most of them operate, and operate rightly, to curb governmental action or remove from its grip whole fields of human endeavour. Least of all can they lead in themselves to a clash with other governments or to an aggressive foreign policy. Quite the reverse. It is in their name that we withdraw from India and Burma and Egypt, that we set self-government as the goal of our colonial development, that we reject the temptations to set up puppet States abroad. So far as we are true to our ideals we practise tolerance, non-intervention, *laissez-faire*. Thus our reaction to other and aggressive ideologies is normally a negative one; and this is even truer of the United States. The Soviet picture of the United States as an expanding, aggressive, imperialistic power bent on conquest and crusading for capitalism is ludicrously false. It is only the violence and pertinacity of Soviet expansion which has averted the isolationism of 1919 and kept the United States continuously and increasingly interested in Europe.

I indicated in the preceding section of this paper that it is very doubtful whether we are faced with an ideology which is intrinsically aggressive. This belief is confirmed when it is realized what are the features of life in the U.S.S.R. and her satellite countries to which we most object, and which offend most obviously against the values I have described as coming nearest to a "western ideology." These features have nothing particular to do with communism, as is shown by the fact that all of them were found in Hitler's Germany and many of them are found in Franco's Spain. The purge, forced labour, compulsory transfers of population, concentration camps, arrest

without warrant, punishment without trial, the use of children and neighbours as spies and informers, the method of ensuring a man's surrender by threatening his relatives, the corruption of truth and beauty and education, the readiness to violate any obligation and to use any tools—these are the things we dislike. This (and not the collectivization of farming or industry) is the fate we fear for Czechoslovakia, as we feared it with equal justice in 1939. Now all this does not add up to an ideology. All of it would be defended by communists as it was by fascists as being means to ends. The quotation from the Harriman Report with which I introduced my subject claims to describe "two conflicting ideologies." So far as it describes our western attitude, I have shown I agree with its emphasis on liberty (and not on Christianity or democracy). But its description of "the opposing system" is clearly not a description of an ideology.

Conclusion

I may now sum up this paper. I have tried to show that it is doubtful whether Soviet policy is inspired by any ideology at all; and that, if it is, that ideology is not in its own nature such as inevitably to lead to conflict or to war. The reasons why the U.S.S.R. push forward any such ideology by aggression or by methods which they share with Fascism are therefore not themselves ideological. I have argued that we in the West have no unified political ideology; that such ideology as we have is not strictly speaking political; that, so far as it enters politics, it comes in as a limiting negative, inhibitive force and not as a dynamic, aggressive, expansive doctrine; and that it is opposed essentially, not to anything ideological in the eastern world, but to features which are (for a communist or a fascist) means to ends. I conclude that, however dark and dangerous the outlook may be, it is not well described as a clash between moral standards or between opposing ideologies. And this, if true, should be to some extent reassuring. For such a clash would be the most inevitable and intransigent cause of conflict. There are many factors which tend to war at present—including even now that fear and suspicion which Hobbes saw to be inevitable in a world of unlimited national sovereignties. No doubt there are other forces too—the desire for power, the hope to cover oppression at home by aggression abroad, the pursuit of resources, markets and raw materials. But I do not find among the present causes of war that most recalcitrant of all causes, the head-on collision between irreconcilable crusaders for incompatible moral creeds.

THE CHOICE OF A WORLD OUTLOOK[1]

Professor DOROTHY M. EMMET.

I take it that my part in this series is not to set forward some particular world outlook, or even to describe different kinds of world outlook. That will have been done already much more adequately by the lecturers who precede me. My part is to discuss what in general is meant by world outlooks, why it is so difficult to arrive at agreement on them, and what kind of considerations should be taken into account in deciding for one rather than another.

The expression "world outlook" is not very satisfactory, but it is perhaps the best translation we can get of the more satisfactory German word *Weltanschauung*. The word has been given its present sense in philosophy by certain German thinkers, notably by Dilthey. (English readers will find a discussion of "world outlooks" in this sense in Albert Schweitzer's *Civilization and Ethics*, the translation of the second volume of his *Philosophy of Civilization*.) Prof. Hodges in his *Introduction to Dilthey* (p. 160) defines *Weltanschauung* as "a complex of ideas and sentiments, comprising (*a*) beliefs and convictions about the nature of life and the world, (*b*) emotional habits and tendencies based on these, and (*c*) a system of purposes, preferences, and principles governing action and giving life unity and meaning." If this definition is to be wide enough to cover world outlooks which are pessimistic, (*c*) might have to consist in an attitude of e.g. fortitude or rebellion.

"World" is thus here being used in a somewhat vague and very inclusive sense. It certainly does not mean just our earth (the *orbs terrarum*). Nor does it mean simply the physical universe as studied by natural science. In this lecture I shall never be talking about the "world" in the former sense; and when I am talking about it in the latter sense, I shall call it "nature." But the expression "world outlook" includes much more than this, and more than a cosmology. It includes man's interpretation of himself as related to his world, the latter comprising his social and possibly his supernatural as well as his physical environment. It includes what is sometimes called an "attitude towards life," and by this is here meant not just something like "the American way of life," or what is nowadays sometimes called a culture pattern, but the connection of this "attitude towards life" with an intellectual scheme. So Christianity and Marxism could be described as "world outlooks."

The expression "choice of a world outlook," as implying conscious

[1] Series *Contemporary World Outlook*, (V).

selection, is of course open to challenge. Ought we to imagine ourselves browsing about among possible world views, displayed to invite our custom, and choosing one and rejecting others, as one might choose a hat? There is something dilettante about the suggestion. Should we not rather say that, of alternative world outlooks, one must be true, or at least contain more truth than the others, and that we have therefore no choice but to accept this and reject the others? Or the phrase "choice of a world outlook" may be challenged from the opposite side. It may be said that our world outlook is ultimately determined by social or by temperamental psychological factors beyond our control or even beyond our awareness, and therefore it is an illusion to hold that we can exercise any real choice in the matter. The first challenge would come from those who maintain that there should and can be a universally agreed objective system of metaphysical knowledge. The latter challenge comes from those who say that, while world views may be expressive of attitudes of mind, there is no way in which canons of objective knowledge can apply to them: *quot homines, tot sententiae.*

Against the former challenge I shall urge that there are real difficulties in the view that metaphysics can be a "science" whose results can command general agreement. But having made this much concession to relativism, I shall urge against the latter party that there are considerations to be weighed, arguments to be pursued with intellectual candour in coming to a world outlook, and that, therefore, if such views are not scientific hypotheses, neither are they simply the expression of socially or temperamentally determined attitudes of mind.

The educated layman who asks philosophers to help him to reach a reasoned outlook on life (if this is what he asks), presumably holds in effect some such mid-way position. He is apt to be distrustful of "metaphysics" (all too easily a word of abuse), and yet he is disturbed if he is told that fundamental beliefs about the world cannot be in some sense true or false. In his Inaugural Address, *Clarity is Not Enough*, given to the first Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association held after the late war, Prof. Price considered this "consumer's demand." He made a stocktaking of the trends in philosophy between the two wars, and showed that while on the whole the criticisms levelled at the "analytic" preoccupations of most contemporary philosophers were misdirected, yet that the latter could justly be criticized for failing to do much to satisfy the "consumer's demand" for help in forming a unified and reasoned outlook on the world. If, he said, we do not accept the contention that it is in principle impossible to satisfy the consumer's demand; if we can be disabused of the idea that a "world outlook" is necessarily an attempt to establish matters of fact by wholly *a priori* reasoning without reference to experience, then it may be possible

to turn once more to consider the possibilities of this synoptic type of philosophy.

There is plenty of evidence that there is a demand for synoptic thinking. We see it in the widespread complaints against "over-specialization," and the plea for more unity and breadth of vision in, for instance, university teaching. But the very intensity of specialization against which complaints are made makes the corrective more difficult to attain. A few generations of close specialization have made us distrustful of generalizations. Those who try to take wider and more inclusive views are therefore pretty sure to burn their fingers, especially if they are unfortunate philosophers, who will be told that they are talking about things they do not properly understand. Perhaps we should not be too afraid of this; on the other hand, we must often have an uneasy feeling that the accusation is true. For the result of specialized and detailed research has been to make standards of evidence, whether in the natural sciences or in subjects like history, more and more exacting. Hence, except among the few theorists in physical science, we get a tendency to concentrate on the piecemeal establishment of matters of fact; and if a general world outlook is implicit in such a tendency, it might perhaps be symbolized by the saying, "The world is the totality of all that is the case" (I borrow Wittgenstein's saying without raising the question of what he himself means by it). But as standards of evidence for establishing matters of fact become more exacting, the question of what constitutes evidence when we pass outside the sciences becomes more difficult to answer. Obviously there are methods of determining evidence, for instance in historical research, which do not depend solely on *sensory* verification; neither is sensory verification the whole of the story in establishing scientific theories. But the temper produced by specialized training is one which breeds distrust of generalization. If we are seeking a synoptic world outlook we must therefore face the Scylla of Positivism, the contention that what constitutes evidence is always in the last resort an appeal to empirical matters of fact.

Scylla may perhaps be escaped by showing that the idea of empirical matter of fact is not altogether simple and straightforward, "The totality of all that is the case" would comprise hosts, perhaps an infinite number, of events. "Matters of fact" for science or history must consist of some relatively isolable events, and to isolate them we must make some selective judgment as to what is interesting or important. Moreover, when we say that something is a fact we mean that it has certain at least relatively permanent characteristics (it won't suddenly vanish or undergo a complete transformation), and that it has causal connections with other things. Is it a fact that there is a black cat on the mantelpiece or am I just "seeing things"? It

will, of course, be a fact that I am having an experience which feels like seeing a cat, but if I am to know whether "in fact" there is a cat, I make certain assumptions about tests of objectivity. These assumptions may not necessarily be universal categories (as Kant thought Substance and Cause to be), but it may be that we make some demands of a general kind on any phenomenon which is to pass for a "fact." The Scylla of pure positivism may therefore be avoided by showing that the possibility of verification by appeal to "fact" depends on a background of presuppositions and assumptions.

Some of these presuppositions are postulates which we see must be allowed in order that a particular kind of inquiry may go on. But when we come to anything as complex as a world outlook, we must take account not only of methodological postulates, but of a whole background of general assumptions about what is and what is not reasonable. So if we avoid the Scylla of pure positivism, we may be engulfed in the Charybdis of saying that a world outlook can be no more than an ideology. By an "ideology" is here meant a complex of ideas, convictions, and valuations which are ultimately derived from the social and psychological heritage of the person who holds them, and which he merely attempts to rationalize in his conscious philosophizing. Hence it may be said that our outlook on the world depends in the end on irrational factors beyond reach of criticism. So we may seem to be in a dilemma: either we stick to piecemeal investigations concerning matters of fact, without inquiring too closely into the assumptions on which our procedure is based, and without venturing out on wider schemes of interpretation. Or we try to unearth our ultimate presuppositions and present them in the form of a world outlook, only to find in the end that this is merely a socially and psychologically conditioned ideology. Or even if it may be possible to affirm some group of presuppositions as our own by an act of conscious decision, as I believe the "Existentialists" would say, yet it may be impossible to bring any objective or critical judgment to bear on them.

But are these the only alternatives? This would be vigorously repudiated by those who hold that there can be a systematic and universally valid science of metaphysics. The best-known upholders of this view at present are the neo-Thomists. I believe that for many people at the present time neo-Thomism is one of the main intellectual alternatives; they see in it the one coherent and rational philosophy in an age of unreason. For this reason, and also because it can serve as a notable example of a metaphysics which claims to be a "science," I shall now spend a little time in commenting on it. I cannot, of course, give any detailed exposition,[1] since my purpose here is only

[1] I have attempted a fuller discussion in Chapter IX of my *Nature of Metaphysical Thinking.*

to try to call attention to some of the main issues in considering world outlooks. Even so, the points I shall be raising may seem rather technical. But Thomism is a highly technical and exacting intellectual discipline; and those who declare for the Thomist world outlook ought to be prepared for close and systematic reasoning. It is a world outlook which least of all should be adopted as a kind of party line by those not prepared to make the effort to follow rigorous metaphysical argument. Students of Thomism may feel that my difficulties can be satisfactorily answered in terms of their own philosophy. If so, good luck to them. But I have not myself found any satisfactory answer in Thomist literature. This may well be due to my own ignorance, but if there are such answers, I shall be grateful to have my attention called to them.

My first difficulty is one of principle. Can there, in fact, be such a thing as "ontology," or a "science of pure being"? A science must have some definite subject-matter marked out from other subject-matters. But in the notion of "pure being" we come to something so general that there is nothing about it to distinguish it from anything else (cf. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, pp. 13 *et seq.* on this). Can the philosophers of "being as such," from Parmenides to the Thomists, therefore, when pressed tell us much more than that "It is what it is"?

What more the Thomists do try to tell us depends on their analysis of Being in terms of the Aristotelian conception of Actuality and Potentiality. But I find it difficult to see that this is a satisfactory analysis of beings as we know them in the world of nature and human life. I cannot help thinking this analysis is bound up with the Aristotelian view of the world as containing a limited number of fixed kinds or species, all growing towards the realization of their specific essences. But does this allow there can be real novelty within nature or indeed human nature? A process or an action would always be the realization of so much potency, thought of as the fulfilment of a fixed type. This seems to commit us to a view of real specific essences; and does this allow sufficiently for the possibility of the emergence of new species, or even for the facts of individuality; and does it allow for the extent to which any process of development depends, not just on the unfolding and the subject's own inner potencies, but on its interrelation with other processes going on in its environment, which may be "ingredients" (to use a word of Whitehead's) in its development? I think Whitehead puts the point when he asks whether we should look on the study of nature as a study of the "procession of forms" or of the "forms of process." Thomists must be able to convince us that once we give up the conception of fixed species in nature it is possible still to hold to the idea of real essences; or indeed that the belief in real essences is itself justifiable.

Another difficulty I find is this: Thomists claim to give a rational explanation of the world, by saying that it is an empirically given fact that the world exists; that its existence is contingent, i.e. it is logically conceivable that it might not have existed; and that therefore there must be a *cause* of its existence in a Necessary Being which must exist, as it were, in its own right. But this argument raises various questions, such as whether we can properly apply the notion of Cause, which is a notion of inductive explanation applicable to sequences of events within the world, to the world as a whole. Of course you may say, need we necessarily restrict the word in this way? But in view of the difficulties that have been found in the notion of Cause by philosophers in the last two generations, I think we must agree that William James was abundantly justified when he remarked that "Causation is too obscure a principle to bear the whole superstructure of Theology." Moreover, even though any empirical existences within the world taken severally may be contingent, yet it is conceivable that the world as a whole might be found to be a necessary system, so that we should have not the First Cause of Thomist theologians but something like the *Deus sive Natura* of Spinoza.

It might then be said that some other system of rationalist metaphysics, for instance the system of Spinoza, might succeed where the Aristotelian–Thomist system fails (if we admit that it does fail). Spinoza's system is based on the belief that the world as a whole is ultimately self-explanatory, and he puts this by saying that the world as a whole, which can be called *Deus sive Natura*, is a single Substance, and that by Substance is meant that which exists in itself and is explained through itself (*id quod est in se et per se concipitur*). But is there any way of demonstrating that the world as a whole *is* a Substance of this kind, any more than of demonstrating the Thomist analysis of the world into finite contingent substances dependent on a First Cause which is a transcendent Necessary Being? I am far from saying that the difference between these two types of view is merely a verbal one depending on different ways of defining the term "Substance." They represent alternative ways of looking at the world, and arguments can be brought forward for both. But since the arguments of neither are conclusive as against the other, can either claim to be a logically demonstrable science of Being?

But need we admit that all that exists is logically necessary (as with Spinoza)? Or, if we say that something exists and might not have existed, can we pass from that to the conclusion that something else must exist (as with Thomism)? Is there not another alternative, namely to accept the fact that "something exists" with what Professor Alexander called "natural piety" and then give the best general description we can of it? This, of course, might be called "irrational"

by a rationalist metaphysician, since it gives no explanation of the existence of the world as a whole. But we can raise the question of whether a "world outlook," if it is to be rational, must give an explanation for the existence of the world as a whole.

It is often claimed that it must. But we have to face the obvious difficulty that the world as a whole can never be an object of consciousness, and so hardly in any exact sense an object of study. Our empirical knowledge is limited *de facto* to those ranges of happenings in space and time which have at any given time been studied by scientific method: it may also (as the Principle of Indeterminacy suggests) come up against certain limits in principle. If we try to extrapolate from this knowledge so as to say something about the world as a whole, we are either having to assume that something like our local cosmic conditions and the ideas which we find appropriate to interpret them hold universally, or we have to make these ideas so general that they hardly tell us anything at all.

It may be, then, that we cannot demand of a world outlook that it should give us an "explanation" of the world as a whole. The word "explanation" and the word "hypothesis" are too closely associated with inductive procedure for this; that is to say, they isolate the phenomenon to be explained, treat it as an instance of a kind, and relate it causally or statistically to other phenomena. So perhaps it will be better to consider world outlooks not as hypotheses or explanations of the world as a whole, but as *interpretations*, that is to say attempts on the part of someone occupying a particular standpoint within the world, to find "meaning" in the world as he sees it. This would mean making a considerable concession to relativism, for it suggests that there may be different standpoints and different interpretations. I believe that we must be prepared to grant this: which brings us back to our question of whether, if we are not convinced by the arguments for a universal science of being, there are any alternatives save to stick to piecemeal investigations or to be plunged into a mere conflict of ideologies.

Are we back, that is to say, between Scylla and Charybdis?

Let me own that I think the belief in the dependence of "world outlooks" on historical conditions (in a very broad sense of the term "historical") has established itself so deeply in the modern consciousness that no metaphysics which has not come to terms with this relativism and acknowledged the truth which it contains is likely to make any headway. It is perhaps significant that the title for this series of lectures is "World Outlooks," and not "Metaphysics." Metaphysics, even if it is not, for good reasons or bad, looked on as a term of abuse, is often identified with the idea of a universal "science of being," the possibility of which we have seen can be questioned. I do not believe "metaphysics" need be so restricted (it

is obviously not in the work of, for instance, Alexander and Whitehead) but meanwhile there may be something to be said for reconsidering some of its possibilities in a humbler way under this title of "world outlook."

We have seen that, following Dilthey, a world outlook can be defined as a complex of ideas and sentiments, comprising (*a*) beliefs and convictions about the nature of life and the world, (*b*) emotional habits and tendencies based on these, and (*c*) a system of purposes, preferences, and principles governing action and giving life unity and meaning. Our question is how far these fundamental beliefs and convictions can be a matter of conscious selection and reasoned judgment: is there anything to prevent them from being mere ideological preferences?

First, I suggest that perhaps we are more likely to escape Charybdis if we treat Scylla with respect. We may be shipwrecked on Scylla if we accept the idea that knowledge consists simply in the piling up of presuppositionless matters of fact. But Scylla has taught us the lesson that we must cultivate a conscience for accuracy in questions of empirical fact. This may not be so simple as it sounds, if we remember that our estimate of "facts" may depend in the end on assumptions we are making in a wider frame of reference. But this should not be made into an excuse for not recognizing that to seek objectivity in questions of fact is a primary obligation. There are sophisticated theories which, arguing that no truth is quite true and no falsehood quite false, and that the notion of what is meant by "fact" is a very obscure one, explain away our simple conviction that *sometimes, at a certain level* truth means correspondence with fact, and whatever our ultimate philosophical theory of truth, this simple conviction should be taken up into it and not made meaningless. As Lord Russell has said somewhere of the proposition, "Bishop Stubbs died in his bed," either he did, or he didn't; and of "Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder," either he was or he wasn't (whatever the manner of his death may mean in the context of the Absolute). There is therefore a discipline of accuracy in dealing with empirical evidence, whether in the sciences or in an arts subject like history, and because this is so a very real measure of agreement and collaboration is possible between people who disagree on wider issues of interpretation. The liberal tradition of "presuppositionless research," even if it was wrong in not recognizing the importance and perhaps inevitability of wider schemes of interpretation, made a very great achievement in insisting that we should cultivate accuracy in empirical investigation. This kind of conscience may therefore be one of the correctives which can prevent our world view from being a mere ideology. For without it we can easily indulge in feats of special pleading or of explaining things away in the interests of our

world view. It may be that no world view of a metaphysical kind (such as Theism or Dialectical Materialism) can ever finally be verified or falsified by appeal to empirical fact. But we must be ready to ask whether, in order to maintain a particular view, we find it necessary to ignore or explain away certain ranges of empirical facts. It is, of course, possible to go to considerable lengths in explaining away; for instance the old marine biologist father in Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* managed to square the facts of the fossils he discovered in his scientific work with a world outlook which contained a fundamentalist view of Genesis by saying that the Lord may have created the world as a going concern, containing fossils with all the signs of great age (that He may, as it were, have been a skilful faker of antiques). Let no one think that this kind of argument is restricted to the pious. Voltaire found that the presence of molluscs and seashells on the tops of inland mountains was being used as evidence for a real Flood (as recorded in Genesis). So he brought forward a number of ingenious explanations of how they could have got there; such as that they might have been cockles dropped from the hats of pilgrims, or have once formed part of a gentleman's collection. But sooner or later, if we go on facing empirical fact, this kind of theory will labour under a strain which may be found to be unbearable, and the critical point may occur when it becomes clear to us that we must alter our fundamental convictions. It may be that to recognize when this point has been reached is not merely a matter of recording further observations, but is a judgment of conscience. The relation between empirical facts and wider schemes of interpretation is a very difficult question: it may in fact be the main way in which the problem of what used to be called "metaphysics" comes home to us. But I do not believe that any solution of this problem is satisfactory which does not fully recognize the necessity of the discipline of taking account of empirical fact as far as it will take us.

How far will it take us? It might be said that as far as it takes us we have science in the broad sense. And therefore it could be said to follow from what I have said that a world outlook should include a general account of the knowledge of nature supplied by science up to date. In principle I believe this is right, but in practice it is questionable whether there is a unified scientific account of the world, or whether there are not simply *sciences*, describing different bits of nature and perhaps describing them at different levels. That there should be some unified general picture emerging from the work of the sciences is highly desirable. Whether we can have one at the present time is a question for philosophically minded scientists to answer. The difficulty, as it appears to a non-scientist like myself, is that it looks as though some of the basic presuppositions of science were undergoing a fairly drastic overhauling. (I have in mind con-

cepts such as the "uniformity of nature," "causality," "natural law," the concept of matter), and until this process has gone rather further and the new fundamental ideas have been more clearly established, it is hard to see just what the "scientific world outlook" consists in. Moreover, it seems necessary to accept, and not to obscure, the real diversities between the different levels on which nature is studied, and which are generally called matter, life, and mind. It is, of course, possible that new border-line sciences such as biophysics or biochemistry may at any time throw more light on the relations between at any rate the two former, and make possible some new generalization, for instance showing us nature as consisting of different types of organized activity, in a way which will do justice to the real diversities of these different types, and yet show the relation between them in some intelligible way. But I think we must say that this is still speculative, and we cannot yet really speak of a "unified scientific view of the world."

And even if we could, would this take us all the way? This is perhaps where the philosopher comes in. For the philosopher is concerned to point out that "the scientific outlook" is an interpretation given by the mind of man to his empirical discoveries about the world in which he lives. In the last resort therefore it is necessary to re-unite the scientific account with the existence of man as thinker and agent. To do this, our world outlook will have to take account not only of nature as science describes it, but also of the other ways, such as the ethical, aesthetic and religious, in which man as thinker and agent experiences his world. There are, of course, many different ways of trying to explain or interpret these forms of experience, and it is not my job here to pronounce on them. But I should say with emphasis that no world outlook can stand which ignores their existence, or fails to give a plausible account of their distinctive characteristics. There are, of course, attempts to account for them all in terms of what are believed to be general scientific ideas, the most widely known of which at present is C. H. Waddington's. Those who are considering this world outlook should be prepared to reckon seriously with the objections to it which have been pointed out by thinkers such as C. D. Broad and A. D. Ritchie, and be quite sure that they have a satisfactory answer to them. It will not do to call a world outlook "scientific" because it can bring natural and ethical phenomena under the same concepts, if those concepts were in fact derived from analogies with human actions and purposes in the first place and read back into the natural world. The concept of "evolutionary progress" may be a case in point.

This brings me to another test which should be applied to a world outlook: will it stand up to a very close critical scrutiny of its fundamental concepts? We can learn a great deal here from following the

thinking of the older metaphysicians. For all too often world outlooks may be drawn in terms of loose concepts; analogies and metaphors used without realizing that they are analogies and without therefore looking to see whether they are good analogies. Amongst a few of those in vogue at present which need watching, I would instance "dynamic," "evolution," "field," "pattern," "dimension."

The next corrective against letting a world outlook be a mere ideology I believe lies in our having a genuine concern for truth and reality. I have spoken of the discipline of empirical accuracy; I now want to go on and say something more "metaphysical" than this. It may be difficult to see what is meant by a concern for truth and reality in any "metaphysical" sense if we are prepared to say that a world outlook must be based on our experience; that experience is always partial and fragmentary, and that our interpretations are bound to be coloured by personal factors and also by the conditions and climate of thought in which we live. But when we have allowed that, for all these reasons, we must be prepared for a certain relativism in world outlooks, I believe that there is still a real dividing line between those who are content that their world outlook should be simply the expression of an attitude of mind, and those who are attempting to make it, for all its partial nature, into an attempt to express truth. What is meant here by "truth" is a very difficult question; it may be argued that there cannot be a complete verification, or *possibly* a complete falsification even for any empirical statement, and so how much more difficult it is to see how a "world outlook" as a whole can be verified or falsified? But I think that here we can distinguish between *verification* and the recognition that we have an obligation to truth, and that this obligation still stands, even if verification is impossible. This may sound paradoxical, but I believe that it is no more than a recognition of the situation in which finite human beings are always placed. In morality similarly we recognize that we have an obligation to do what is right, but we can never know for certain that what we believe we ought to do is what is right in an objective sense. This point was put religiously by Father Kelly of Kelham, when an earnest student asked him, "But how do we know what the Will of God really is?" and he answered, "That's the giddy joke: we don't." I believe that our world outlooks, as well as our moral decisions, are involved in this giddy joke. But just as in morality there is a real difference between those who just accept relativism, and those who, while recognizing our fallibility, yet accept the obligation of conscience that they should do their best in each situation, so also in forming a world outlook there is a real difference between a mere relativism, and the kind of thinking which, in spite of being incomplete and partial, is yet carried on under the recognition of a transcendent obligation.

Obligation to what? It might be said to "truth": but there is a view of truth which identifies it with the internal coherence of our interpretations of experience. I therefore said advisedly a little while ago that one of the questions concerning a world outlook is whether it expresses a genuine concern for *truth and reality*. Now "reality" is a large word, and a slippery word. It sounds impressive, but what does it mean? I am obviously meaning by it here not simply "the totality of all that is the case," since I am considering an obligation to seek something more than just empirical accuracy.

I believe that there is a real issue to be decided as between the world outlooks of those who believe that there is a transcendent reality over against us, which is what it is, and the views of those who are only concerned to achieve internal consistency. You may say that to assume the former begs a very large question: but what I am concerned to do at present is to say that I do not believe that the question is a merely verbal one, as if we were to say that the choice is merely which language we find most convenient, for instance a "material object language" or a "sense datum language." Moreover, Phenomenalism (i.e. the theory that statements about material objects can be analysed into statements about sense data, without reference to transcendent entities) is plausible as a spectator's philosophy: but when we pass from contemplation to action, our conviction that we are set in an environment on which we act and are acted upon by other things is irresistible. Perhaps Dr. Johnson was seeing this in his crude way when he tried to refute Berkeley by kicking a large stone "till he rebounded from it." It was, as Professor Price has said, a "bilateral dynamic transaction." The stone kicked back.[1] I believe, therefore, that when we come to consider *action* and not only states of consciousness, that the burden of proof rests with the people who deny that we have any reason to say that the objects of experience transcend experience. I am well aware that this raises all sorts of questions which I cannot go into here. I can only put the issue as one which I believe is much more than a verbal one. In weighing different kinds of world outlook we can distinguish those which make some kind of unity out of our experience and leave it at that, and those which, while allowing that our experiences are all we have to go on, yet also hold that through them we are trying to interpret reality other than ourselves. World views written in this latter spirit should be able both to convey a sense of their own incompleteness (that "leagues beyond those leagues there is more sea") and yet at the same time be rooted in an absolute obligation to respect reality.

Of course I cannot claim to be able to say that only a world outlook

[1] Cf. H. F. Hallett, "Dr. Johnson's Refutation of Bishop Berkeley," *Mind*, April 1947.

which asserts some kind of ultimate realism will do. All I can ask here is whether this type of view does or does not express the human situation more adequately than those which are concerned simply with the development of internally coherent systems of thought. My own conviction about our "human situation" is that the more we think about it, the more we must be conscious that world outlooks are partial and incomplete, and since none can be all-inclusive, each will tend to put emphasis on the kinds of interest round which it is written. But the fact that we can be critically aware of these limitations means that we are conscious of an obligation both to acknowledge them and to correct them in whatever degree may be in our power. This recognition of obligation is the absolute point in any world outlook, and can be the point of stability which differing world outlooks find in common. So if I were asked to name a "unifying principle," I should say that at any rate we can find one in the mutual recognition of *conscience* among responsible thinkers. There can be no escape from complete relativism for world views which deny the authority (which is not the same as the infallibility) of conscience. For conscience is the capacity to recognize obligation, and therefore the condition for responsible thinking.

But when we have said that we must recognize both that we have a transcendent obligation and also that any world outlook will be partial, we must obviously then go on and try to make this world outlook as coherent an interpretation of experience as possible. Hence it seems that the possibility of a world outlook depends on our being able to find some unifying principle in another sense than that in which we find it in conscience, namely, we must find a co-ordinating principle of interpretation. I believe that this is generally done by taking concepts expressing relations found within certain ranges or thought or experience and extending them by analogy to others, to see whether some co-ordinated scheme can be achieved by this means. So Plato suggests that the reality of things is to be looked for in intelligible formal elements: an extension of the idea of pure forms as grasped in logic and mathematics; Aristotle finds his clue in the teleological categories of his biology. He sees the world as a hierarchy of processes, developing towards the actualizing of their complete nature. One could go on instancing particular world outlooks written round a particular type of relationship which has been selected as a unifying principle.

But since our experience is, as we have said, partial and fragmentary, and since it discloses real diversities not easily reduced by unifying principles, such principles, built as they are on analogies, are likely to become strained and break when we stretch them far. We may refuse to see this, and develop a one-sided outlook in which principles derived from the interpretation of one kind of experience

are made to dominate others without any attempt to do justice to the characteristic differences of these others, and therefore to the limitation of our analogies. We then get a kind of ideology. Such as would be the inability of some of the theologically trained to discuss any problem in, for instance, politics, economics or science except in theological language; or the attempt to give a "scientific" account of ethical or aesthetic experience by leaving out the characteristically ethical or aesthetic elements. (Perhaps Freudianism is a case in point.) Correctives to this kind of ideology would be a sensibility for different kinds of experience, and the metaphysical conviction which I have mentioned—namely that reality is what it is. These two correctives are likely to make us suspicious of unifying schemes, since we shall realize that any such scheme must involve a high degree of simplification. Will they prevent us achieving one at all? I think we must acknowledge that any world outlook is only possible by means of selective simplification. If therefore we are not to rule world outlooks out of court altogether we must ask at what point simplification becomes (dyslogistically) over-simplification. Here I should say that simplification is legitimate if it brings out what is important and omits or dismisses into the background what is trivial or mere matter of detail. This holds whether we are presenting a subject in words or in painting, or whether we are trying to give an "interpretation" of the world. For most people are not interested to be told that reality "is what it is," nor to be told that empirically it is "the totality of all that is the case." What they want when they talk about "reality" are some pegs on which to hang their thinking; something they can feel is important, and in Lord Balfour's phrase "really real." Otherwise if they feel that nothing is important, that nothing really matters, the sense of triviality soon slides into a sense of unreality.

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.

Eliot writes in *The Waste Land* that epitome of the modern sense of triviality. Wordsworth had also felt baffled and confused amid the vastness of London. The picture of the great city was "unmanageable," yet he found

It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the part
As part, but with a feeling of the whole.[1]

Is not this exactly what people ask of a world outlook? They feel that our accumulated mass of factual information has become

[1] Prelude VII, 733–36. My attention was called to this latter passage by Professor J. W. Harvey.

"unmanageable." They want not just an intellectual scheme, but something which gives them a sense of the relative importance of things, which gives them among least things "an under sense of greatest," which will help them, as we say, to see things in proportion. But can this be supplied? For it may be said that the feeling for what is important may be amongst the most subjective of our judgments, and may we not just be reading our interests and preferences into the universe?

But does "importance" always mean an emphasis put on something because it is relevant to some interest or purpose in our part? Often it is so; if I want to catch my train it is important for me to leave the house now. But is it important that I should catch my train? Yes, perhaps, as a means to my carrying out some plan or engagement. But is the plan or engagement important? We shall be driven back in the end to the question of whether it is possible to say that some ends or purposes are absolutely more important than others, or whether the word "important" simply expresses our own emotional preoccupation. I think that we are quite sure that sometimes it must mean more than this. I am quite sure that the success of the Peace Settlement is more important than my success in this lecture, although at the moment I am emotionally preoccupied with the latter. On what kind of objective grounds can we justify this conviction? First, I should say that which is important makes a difference; it may make a difference to a number of other things, and make it in a decisive way. On the other hand, "that which makes no difference" can be taken to be the vanishing point both of importance and of reality. *It does not really matter.*

There are various ways in which things can make a difference. It may be by creating commotion and disturbances; it may be occasionally (even in these days!) by creating possibilities of order. When we pass from events or occurrences to *ideas*, we can also say that an important idea is one which makes a difference in a decisive way, as, for instance, Copernicus' hypothesis of the motion of the earth. Other ideas or theories have to be interpreted or reinterpreted with reference to this as a key idea; but it itself cannot be satisfactorily explained in terms of the others.

The ideas which serve as unifying principles in world outlooks have to be "important" ideas in this sense. It has to be possible to show that a co-ordinated map of our knowledge of the world can be achieved by reference to these as key ideas. (So Alexander uses the key ideas of space-time, emergence and quality.) But of course it is always possible that the unifying principles may be too narrow, or that the philosopher's power to produce a co-ordinated world outlook in terms of them may reduce itself to his ability to create a skilful composition. I believe a corrective here is what I have called the

realist sense: that in the end reality is what it is, and although we must inevitably base our *interpretation* of reality on some selective judgment of what we hold to be important, we must not use these judgments as *definitions* of what is real. I believe that the latter tendency is found in some idealistic world views, which tend to define reality in terms of Value, or "to seek in what should be the ground of what is" (Lotze). But if we restrict our ideas of reality to what we judge to be important, reality itself may give us some unexpected shocks.

Another consideration may be to ask whether there is not another aspect to "importance." An important idea may be one which can be shown to be a possible co-ordinating idea; this is theoretical importance. There is also practical importance, which I have suggested may be described in terms of making a difference on a wide scale, or in a decisive way. But I think importance may sometimes have another aspect, which I shall call "achievement," and contrast with triviality. The sense of triviality, we have said, can be the most devastating form of scepticism. Hence it is often allied with the sense of unreality. If nothing really matters, then perhaps nothing is real, or at any rate "really real." But a corrective to the sense of triviality is to appreciate something which has achieved some measure of excellence. When this is on a sufficient scale we call it greatness. So among the things which we can judge important in an absolutist sense, i.e. we can say that they "really matter," are not only those which make a difference, but those which are in some sense achievements of excellence. If we think of the specific kinds of excellence proper to human beings, we can name achievements in character, in the products of the imagination, as in art or literature, and in actions which shape decisively man's life in society. In all these "importance" can mean not only relevance to some end or interest, but some measure of definite achievement. For its proper contrast would be not the irrelevant but the trivial. I believe that no world outlook can stand which does not sustain our sense of the importance of these things. This does not necessarily mean that we "read our values into the universe." For unless we are very blind or lacking in candour we must, I think, admit that some things or actions do achieve a quality which calls for admiration (not often, perhaps, but sometimes). And therefore, being human, our part in the world should be to cherish or promote these things. Here let me say that, while I do not think that we ought to expect a world outlook to entail a particular programme, I believe that it ought to help us to define our attitude to political and social action by clarifying the kinds of things we think are important in the sphere of "human values," which is the sphere with which politics is so concerned. But neither do I believe that a world outlook should be so parochial as only to be interested in "human values." It

should try in some way to see them in relation to the non-human universe. In this regard I should say that I do not believe that "human values" are logically dependent on a theistic metaphysics, They can be sustained by various types of world outlook. But I believe that there is a difference between the world outlooks which, in recognizing the importance of these values, are centred in man, and those which are able both to sustain our sense of that importance, and yet at the same time to express a sense of man's dependence on a greatness in the universe other than that of his own achievements—a sense expressed in some of the religious world outlooks by the word "creatureliness." I do not think that even such world outlooks are necessarily theistic, at any rate in the ordinary sense (it may be that the nicest thing ever said of any metaphysician was said to Alexander by Claude Montefiore, "You walk so humbly with your funny God"). But whether they can be labelled "theistic" or not, I believe that there is a recognizable difference between the world outlooks which convey this quality and those which do not. And those which do so can sustain our sense of importance without its being tainted by self-importance.

Philosophy is often popularly held to be a means of making us realize our insignificance, "that we are not particularly important." There is a truth in this, if it means that it should find ways of bringing home to us a sense of the incredible vastness of the world both in space and time. The sense for this has certainly not grasped the popular imagination, or even the imagination of many philosophers. Some world outlooks might even be suspected of being protective mechanisms against it. But I believe that no world outlook which presents man's life in the universe as merely trivial can be adequate: not just adequate to our self-esteem, but adequate to the facts of the achievements of certain lives and minds which call out our admiration (unless we are, I believe, not really too humble, but too conceited to be willing to admire).

Of course the people interested in world views will not only be philosophers and metaphysicians, and a good deal of what I have said may have sounded somewhat technical, and relevant only to the particular concerns of philosophers. But I have been trying throughout the discussion to disentangle some considerations which may be brought to bear on any world outlook. The discussion is therefore addressed to those who want seriously to weigh and judge world outlooks, and not simply to toe the party lines of fashionable ideologies. I have admitted that I do not believe that there is any decisive way in which world outlooks can be verified or falsified. Nevertheless I have tried to find certain considerations which can relevantly be applied in judging them. Let me summarize these.

(i) The respect shown for empirical facts in so far as these can be established by experiment and research.

(ii) The respect for objectivity, as shown not only by respect for empirical fact, but also by a belief that there is reality beyond ourselves. This sense may best be conveyed if it is possible to sustain a realist metaphysics, in which the objects of experience transcend experience. But any world outlook, whether realist or not, ought to convey the impression of being an "open system."

(iii) The willingness to recognize that, since a world outlook must depend on an interpretation of experience, and since experience is always partial, a world outlook must be to some extent partial and incomplete. It will also be affected by the kind of thought forms available to the thinker.

(iv) Along with this should nevertheless go a recognition of obligation to truth which will make the thinker critical of his own partiality, though he knows that he can never completely transcend it.

(v) Since the obverse side of a critical awareness of our own partiality is an awareness of obligation, no world outlook which includes a view of man such as would make it impossible for him to recognize obligation can be a critical view.

(vi) In presenting a world outlook we must not ignore the fact that it is a construction of thought, and therefore we must be able in the end to include man himself as thinker and agent in the picture.

(vii) A world outlook may be presented in terms of certain key ideas drawn in the first place from the interpretation of one kind of experience, and it must be shown to be possible to extend these as co-ordinating principles without doing violence to the known diversities between different kinds of experience.

(viii) A world outlook, if it is to be presented or grasped at all, must be a simplification drawn up by means of a selective judgment as to what is important. It should be possible to defend this judgment by showing that other things are explicable with reference to those on which attention has thus been focused.

(ix) There may be some things which we judge to be important because they call out the special admiration due to excellence. The meaning of the world may not be exhausted by, or even centred in, the particular excellences open to human beings. But nevertheless, since we are human beings, these things are our special concern, and therefore no world outlook which does not convey a concern to foster them can be adequate.

(x) A world outlook should sustain the sense that life is im-

portant and not merely trivial. But importance is not the same as self-importance.

Of course I should not claim that this list is complete. You may be able to add to it, and I shall be very glad if you can. You may also dispute some of my points. But if any considerations such as these I have mentioned enter into the choice of a world outlook, I think we can say that it can be a matter for reasoned and responsible judgment. It need be neither a merely arbitrary decision nor just the result of temperamental predilection. Even though we may not be able to claim logical certainty in our ultimate convictions, as was claimed by some of the older metaphysicians, we need not be given over in such matters to complete irrationality.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE MORAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME[1]

W. J. H. SPROTT, M.A.

THE title of this lecture, as it stands now, is "Psychology and the Moral Problems of Our Time." When I received the extremely flattering invitation to address you, the proposed title was "Light from Psychology on the Moral Problems of Our Time," and as I am not by any means sure that Psychology throws a very clear light upon our problems, I begged that the title might be toned down. I say this at the outset, because I am afraid that you may be disappointed by the emptiness of the psychological cupboards—at any rate so far as illumination upon the moral problems of our times is concerned, and if I were to appear before you claiming to be a torch-bearer, you would be justified in accusing me of false pretences.

To begin with, I was myself taken in by the sonorous simplicity of the latter half of the title: "Moral Problems of Our Time." Surely, I thought, they are obvious enough. The austerity we endure is not a virtuous exercise in self-denial, it is attributed to the wickedness and culpable stupidity of other people. The uneasy suspicion which pervades the intercourse of statesmen in international affairs, the fear of war, the atom bomb, all these, it may be said, show that there is something wrong, and we readily pass to the proposition that if only men were more good, then things would not be as they are. The fact is, so men say, that our moral stature does not match our scientific knowledge.

Now, if I may make a personal confession: I find that I always start by accepting the sonorous, and then I find myself eyeing it with deepening suspicion. To speak of the moral problems of our time seems to imply that there are problems of a moral nature which are special to *our* time and not to other times, and there is, I think, a faint hint that we are somehow worse now than men of past ages, that there has been a decline in morality. If this *is* meant, I am not at all satisfied that it is true. I should have thought that never were more people disturbed by, and interested in, the welfare of more people. The enormous increase in our social services and the enthusiasm with which young men and women take up social work of all kinds: the probation service, the services of hospital almonery, the profession of personnel management and so on, ought not to be ignored. Nor should we forget the reasoned and sympathetic attitude which an

[1] Lecture delivered at the Royal Institute of Philosophy, October 31, 1947, in the series "Moral and Political Conflicts of Our Time."

increasing number of persons take towards the proper treatment of criminals, both old and young, and the time and money which we are prepared to expend in improving the institutions in which such persons are treated. No one who has lived near a prisoner of war camp can fail to have noticed the sympathy aroused by the prisoners, and, I would add from my experience, the *reasoned* sympathy, not mere soppiness, but a sympathy which takes account of the claims a victor nation may have on the nationals of the conquered one to repair the damage they have done. And this sympathy and interest finds expression in all classes of the community. Furthermore, I would urge that those who accuse our time of being one of degenerating morality, are sometimes influenced by what is, in fact, a sign of the reverse, namely, the enormous fuss that we make nowadays about cases of brutality, cruelty, and negligence which are brought to our notice. We have no comparative studies by means of which to check our criticism. We deplore, and rightly, broken homes, but what evidence have we that there is, in fact, a greater proportion of broken homes to-day than there were, say, one hundred years ago? We may quote the comparative statistics of divorces, but we know perfectly well that divorce is not the only way in which homes are broken. Finally, in our reflections about foreign peoples—I do not say "foreign affairs"—the amount of intelligent and sympathetic weighing of the moral issues involved in their fate does no small credit to the ever-increasing number of persons who turn their attention to such things. And I repeat that in my experience this generosity, this attempt to weigh claims justly, this striving after an enlightened attitude towards other people is to be found in all classes of the community.

I must not, however, take up any more time handing round rose-coloured spectacles. All, I would say, is not ill, but at the same time all is not well. It may be objected, for example, that although we might agree that people are generous enough, perhaps more generous than they used to be, when they contemplate the ill-fate of distinguishable groups of other persons: prisoners, displaced persons, prostitutes, homo-sexuals, Jews, Germans, the sick, the workers in factories, and so on, nevertheless, people are talking of the threat of war, and when it comes to putting self last and the general welfare of the country first, there is a regrettable lack of co-operative enthusiasm. Spivs and drones, strikes and short hours—we shake our heads: if only. . . . If only what? If only everyone were imbued with a selfless devotion to duty and to service, if only they would put sectional disagreement and sectional advantage aside, if only—in fact—everyone approximated to the ideal type of the professional classes, *then*, though economic difficulties would have to be overcome, at least we should put up a better show than we are doing. That, I

think, is at least one of the things which people have in mind when they think of the moral problems of our time.

What points of psychological interest arise? I do not propose to discuss the problems of international relations, because I think the psychological problems are extremely obscure. I am not unaware of the importance of the theories which assert that our attitude towards other countries is partly determined by the fact that we use them as targets for the displacement of our domestic hates and guilts. In so far as this hypothesis is true, statesmen can rely on the efficacy of certain forms of propaganda. But I do not think that such theories, valuable as they are, go very far. We enter a world of personalities in which general psychological inquiry is of very little use, and in which our evidence is at a minimum. All we know is that fewer people can do more damage than ever before, and what will happen depends, so far as I can see, on the purposes and motives of a relatively small number of persons. And I feel that the psychological problems involved are so intimately connected with unknown details about the persons concerned that one is floored without a great deal more information.

I therefore turn to the other problems, delinquency and the absence of a selfless devotion to toil, and I want to begin with a descriptive formula of human personality. I would provisionally describe a human personality as a more or less integrated hierarchy of purposes operating in a setting of beliefs. Such a simplified framework does not, of course, cover all that psychologists are interested in, but I want here to emphasize certain aspects of persons. The "purposes" of which I speak are, at this descriptive level, to be considered as conscious purposes, formulated before the mind in varying degrees of concreteness. A fuller account, for which there is no time here, would distinguish between such degrees of concreteness. A man may have as his purpose, consciously presented, the giving of a good education to his children, or sending his son to a particular school next term; a man may want to get something to eat, or go to a specific restaurant; and so on. What I wish to emphasize is that a man's purposes at the descriptive level have some concreteness, in the sense that they are couched in terms of the possibilities open to him in the society of which he is a member. The desire for food, the desire to make money are, I suggest, never abstract, but always present themselves either in terms of a specific mode of satisfaction, or as implying in the background certain relatively concrete alternative modes of satisfaction.

By "hierarchy" of purposes I mean (*a*) that some purposes *in fact* prove dominant over others in the sense that they consistently triumph in the case of conflict, and (*b*) that a man regards certain purposes as having higher value than other purposes. By "integra-

tion" I mean the degree to which there is consistency in a man's general conduct, the degree to which certain dominant purposes are pursued, so that other purposes, while having their time and place in a man's life, do not interfere with those upon which he sets most store.

Now psychologists, who have turned their attention to this aspect of human behaviour, have formulated hypotheses in terms of which the actual purposes of which a man is aware, and which he certainly thinks he is aiming at, are to be interpreted. We have at least three kinds of theory: (1) Theories which classify purposes on the basis of crude similarities, such as food-getting ones, assertion ones, aggressive ones, and so on, and then put forward the hypothesis of determining tendencies, urges or instincts which correspond to the classification, and are regarded as the dynamic energies forcing people to act in certain directions. (2) A second type of theory is like the first, but the classification is much less expected. Purposes which appear to be very unlike one another are said to be energized by the same so-called "real" motive, whether we recognize it or not—and usually not. The evidence for such hypotheses is, of course, extremely complicated, and the content of such hypotheses varies from one school of thought to another. (3) A third type of theory interprets our purposes in terms of social forces: class warfare, it may be, or a culture-pattern which imposes itself upon us. Now I wish to say emphatically that all these types of theory have been of very great value in rendering human purposes intelligible. Such investigations are of the utmost importance, but there is a danger, I think, of losing sight of the concrete purposes as they present themselves in consciousness, and I believe these to be of importance, too. It may well be that a person thinks he is pursuing a certain purpose, while his actions give the lie to his protestations, and the discovery of the unconscious motivating agency is of enormous value, but we run the risk of ignoring the fact that he not only cannot acknowledge his so-called "real" motive, but that he *does* have to present himself with a purpose which he regards reputable. The fact that men have to justify their actions in their own eyes, and feel they must also do so in the eyes of others, seems to me of importance. To say that he is really "*only*" satisfying a motive so discreditable that he cannot face up to it because his super ego is threatening to castrate him if he does, is only to tell part of the story. Again, to turn to two very different theories but of the same type, I am not satisfied when M. Sartre tells me that if I do not consciously despair, it is because my condition is so parlous that I dare not contemplate it, or when Dr. Fromm tells me that if I do not feel lonely it is because I am so unnerved by my real solitude that I must thrust it from my mind. I am still old-fashioned enough to think that what I am conscious of

is not wholly worthless as a testing-ground for psychological hypothesis.

Turning to the first of my types of theories, the simple instinct theory: it keeps closer to conscious experience, and, admittedly, loses thereby in interpretive interest, but even here there are dangers. Instincts or urges are recklessly multiplied, and the multiplication is not uninfluenced by the notion of what would be advantageous if it were true. I have read, for instance, of an instinct or urge to work, and the suggestion has been made that personnel management is a device to remove the obstacles which thoughtless employers have put in the way of that urge finding full expression. I should require a good deal of evidence in terms of conscious purpose before I accepted that hypothesis. Finally, I fight shy of social determinants which represent members of societies as puppets moved by social forces. I cannot deny such forces, but I think we ought to seek explanation in terms of the interactions of individual purposes before we fall back upon such unverifiable entities.

On these grounds I feel that in spite of the vast importance of the hypothesis of unconscious motivating forces we shall do well not to ignore the common-sense level of conscious desire.

Now let me return to my picture of the personality as a more or less integrated hierarchy of purposes. We have, I think, as a kind of ideal, a man whose dominant purposes are those which he and we regard as respectable, and so far integrated that he pursues these righteous ends without interference from purposes of a lower order. People often talk as though the achievement of such an integrated personality were the easiest thing in the world, and express astonishment when others fall short in any marked degree. To my mind, it is far more remarkable that so many of us are as admirable as we are, than that there are several people who have not made the grade. With all the intellectual ability at our disposal, and the fact that we are not likely to be suspected, it does us credit that we behave as well as we do. Now one of the ways in which psychology is concerned with the moral problems of our time has to do with the factors which prejudice this development. The problem is two-fold: what prejudices integration, and what prejudices the establishment of reputable purposes? The inquiry may be pursued under four headings: (1) constitutional factors may be involved; (2) a factor of maturation may be involved; (3) personal relations between child and parent are undoubtedly involved; and (4) the opinions, beliefs, conduct, opportunities, and assumptions a child comes across inside and outside his home are undoubtedly involved. There may be constitutional factors of emotionality or emotional instability, which make integration difficult where such factors are found, and the technique of factorial analysis combined with genetic theory is of importance in this

context. The maturation factor is, I think, of interest, and I would remind you of the "follow-up" studies of the Gluecks,[1] who wanted to find out whether juvenile penal institutions in America really were responsible for such successes as they claimed. They came to the conclusion that the evidence of reformatory influence was by no means clear, and they made the suggestion that perhaps social adaptation is something which proceeds, as it were, by "nature" in most of us, that some of us are retarded at certain significant ages, but that in a matter of some seven years the retarded can catch up, having, as they put it, "gotten delinquency out of their system." The third factor, the personal relations between a child and its parents, is obviously important as facilitating or impeding integration, particularly when one contrasts consistent behaviour of both parents with inconsistent behaviour on the part of one or both, or behaviour in one which is inconsistent with that of the other. I think it is generally agreed that the stability of a personality is facilitated if the immediate family environment is stable. These factors which may be concerned in the achievement or otherwise of satisfactory integration are doubtless powerful, but, from the point of view of "our time" as distinct from any other time, I think the fourth factor, the opinions, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and evaluations which a person meets with in the behaviour and expressions of people with whom he comes in close contact is of greater interest. At this point I wish to put the following rough generalizations before you: (1) If a variety of alternative ways of behaving are presented as equally possible, it is harder to centre our purposes round one single aim; (2) if among this variety there is a contrast between immediate satisfactions of what a person may regard as a "lower" nature, and remoter satisfactions of a "higher" nature, the immediate satisfactions have a strong attractive force, the attraction is the greater, the more intense the satisfaction, and, again, it is harder to achieve an integrated personality, whose main purposes are these remoter and "higher" ones (3) if money is a preoccupation among those about you, as a standard of value, then enterprises which bring easy money, or the chance of winning a fortune for sixpence will have a pull; and (4) if these attraction competitions can be backed with plausible argument they are thereby rendered the stronger in their appeal; (5) so far from their being an urge to work, as such, any excuse is better than none to undermine the force of those purposes, the carrying out of which demands distasteful activity.

These generalizations are very rough; they require more elaborate formulation, and I cannot pretend that they are in any way profound. I have set them forth, however, because I think that they

[1] Glueck, S. and E. T.: *After-Conduct of Discharged Offenders*, University of Cambridge English Studies in Criminal Science (Macmillan, 1945).

operate particularly in our time. I suggest that those of us who have achieved some sort of integrated law-abiding personality which, with some kind of consistency, puts conscientious service to our jobs or to the community before cheating or striking, are fortunate in having been brought up with people who took that kind of thing for granted and never seriously considered any alternative. The professional classes, the civil servants, have developed a code, which excludes a great many purposes, not merely as courses of action to be contemplated but rejected, but as, in some sense, "*unthinkable.*" They have accepted their own professional code, and what we might call the "gentry tradition," with its long history of paternal responsibility for public affairs, and its assumption of being the ruling class, and therefore involved, however indirectly, in the affairs of the nation. What I am suggesting is that we are as good as we are largely because it has never *seriously* occurred to us to do anything else. When my friend Norman, a window cleaner, who has done many other things, said to me the other day: "I say, as a matter of fact, how much can you fiddle on your job?" I had to admit that I had never given the matter any thought. He looked at me with friendly pity: a spiv *manqué.* Now in other walks of life, what with scientific progress, increased communication, gas meters, and the heightened mobility of ideas, a far greater range of enterprises is opening up than ever before. It is not merely a matter of lads robbing an orchard, you can get a car and carry off sacks full; you know someone who did it and got away with it, and made a pretty penny. And why not? "Whose apples are they, anyway? What right has old so-and-so to have so many apples? I bet he fiddles with his income tax return." This trivial example is merely to be taken as a paradigm of my contention that a wider range of seriously thinkable purposes, near-legal and illegal, present themselves nowadays. The immediate returns are larger; you can make quick money and therefore feel that you have scored over the mugs; there are plenty of plausible excuses current, and all this makes good law-abidingness more difficult to achieve. This, I believe, to be the case particularly in the economic field, and I think it would be a mistake to generalize over the whole field of human activity and relationships. Norman, again, was instructing me about how to cheat customers if I went into the firewood business in which he was then engaged—all about delivering 12 bags when 14 have been paid for, and the misleading but ingratiating gestures you should make. I said: "But it sounds to me like stealing two bags." "Oh, no," says he, scandalized, "it's in the way of business. I mean everyone in the way of business has got to fiddle; it's how they make their living." Now as a *bon père de famille,* as a companion and among friends, Norman is as impeccable as any other delinquent.

While, however, I think that consistent goodness is more difficult to achieve, for the reasons I have given, I do not know how far consistent badness is on the increase. The wide guy, who measures *everything* by its contribution to his width, is, I should have thought, rarer than is often supposed.

Turning now to the problem of working for the community, we are, I suggest, faced with much the same factors in a different context, but with an important additional one. There are those, as I have said, who perpetuate the conscientious social service—though they may not call it that—of a responsible ruling class. Business men doubtless preserve their high regard for work, and a sense of identification with the nation and Empire, the prosperity of which is so closely linked with their own, though here excuses for inaction are accumulating: "I should like to do what I can, but the Government won't let me," or "Wot, more forms?" And I suspect that if one looked, one would find a growing sense of apathy and hopelessness, due to frustration. It is when we come to the vast multitudes of working men and women that we find new hitherto unthought-of alternatives presenting themselves once more. In the past, I suggest, the masses of the people worked because they had to, because life was like that. There was no widespread sense of the real possibility of doing anything else, or materially altering your conditions of labour. All that has changed. They are organized and can make themselves felt; they are articulate, and they have an idea of themselves as exploited. The notion of a sensible working man as being one who does as little work for as much as possible is widely current. The irritating sense of being patronized by people who come to do them kindnesses—which finds expression in the defensive: "I don't mind," or "You *can* do," when assistance is offered—has given place to a demand for such services as a right; they must be *free* in every sense, why should we work for them? There is a sort of parvenu spirit abroad: "They're not going to mess us about any more; we'll show them who is boss now." The old class structure has gone haywire; incomes no longer parallel status even to the extent that they did in the past, so that new luxuries and new standards of life are envisaged.

There has, too, been a change in the cultural climate of the working classes. Anyone who has had much to do with adult education will recognize the old stalwarts of the movement. Those who survive are in their sixties or seventies, products, perhaps, of the 1870 Act. In their day they were serious-minded, conscientious, working men; they had a sense of craftsmanship; they were influenced by nonconformity and rationalist humanitarianism; they had high ethical aspirations, and accepted the cultural standards of the middle classes; they wanted to improve themselves; they belonged to the "Lit. and

and Phil.", or the Mechanics Debating Society; they read Carlyle and Emerson, and for them socialism and trade unionism were of the order of a moral crusade. Furthermore, they formed an aristocracy of labour, and they were respected by those less intellectually inclined than themselves.

Now the position is different. The ethical fervour of the nineteenth century has decayed. The desire to improve oneself has given way to the desire to better oneself. A friend of mine tells me that during a discussion on freedom with some young working men, one of them exclaimed: "B—— freedom, we want security; freedom's a bourgeois idea." In this connection we must remember than in 1925 the proportion of children from elementary schools entering grammar schools was 8·5 per cent, while to-day it is something like 16 per cent, and in some areas as high as 25 per cent, and before 1925 it was very much smaller than 8 per cent. This means that an intellectual cream is being lost to industry altogether. In the world of trade unionism, the *movement* has grown into the bureaucratic organization, providing avenues out of overalls into black coats. The organiser, the trade union official in large unions must be trained for his job, and might even be drawn from outside industry altogether, in those unions in which officials are appointed rather than elected—a device which stymies the efforts of a certain well-known group who are particularly assiduous in their attendance at branch meetings. The result is that whereas in the past the centre of gravity among the rank and file lay towards the intellectual élite, now it lies lower down towards the masses, who are beginning to feel their power, and are suspicious of their official leaders, who have moved away from them.

To this we must add that the grouping of workers in enormous industrial categories tends to reduce the sense of individual responsibility, making the problem of leadership of prime importance, while the aggregation of operatives in large face-to-face groups may well tend to heighten the suggestibility, and all the opportunities that crowd psychology offers to the orator. Such traditions as there were, favourable to work, have broken down, and those which have survived are against it: hostility and suspicion of the employer. Furthermore, the negotiator in the trade union world who is, in any case, separated from the workers, is subject to the divided loyalties of all negotiators; he must do his best for those whom he represents, and he must do the right thing for the country, on whose prosperity the welfare of everyone depends, but it is ridiculous for him to make an agreement which there is no chance of the rank and file respecting. In all this, I suggest, we see old horizons receding, and new effective alternatives presenting themselves, which were, at most, only dreamt of in the past.

The other factor, which I mentioned as being important, is this: I doubt whether the bulk of working men have ever identified themselves with the country at large. To mention the Empire usually provokes an undue use of the second letter of the alphabet. When we reflect that such concepts as "the country" and "the Empire" are mental constructs, it is not surprising that they are, as it were, constructed differently in the minds of members of different classes of the community. During a war, perhaps, whether because they are frightened and want it to stop, or because they have displaced their aggressive attitude, outside the country, and are therefore consolidated with released libido, there may be some sense that they are Englishmen and in a common danger, but an economic crisis is no such apparent, exciting, frightening affair. How can it be? It is not so real as a bomber, and it is the fault of the authorities anyway, let *them* get us out of the mess. The dream of the British Empire is one which has inspired another section of the community, and it is, for that reason, suspect to the one we are considering. There *is* a dream, and one we have all heard of: when a miner was asked whether he was going to work harder after some agreement or other had been made, he replied: "Ah! on one condition—good relations with Soviet Russia. I would work fifteen hours a day for Soviet Russia."

I have not mentioned as a factor the hidden hand. I have no evidence that there is a hidden hand at work, daily sabotaging our efforts, but even if there were the significant thing would be that it had an effect.

We hear of enthusiastic rebuilding abroad, in Jugoslavia, for instance. How far this is widespread among the population it is impossible to say, but if it be present the question arises: why there and not here? I suggest these relevant differences between such a comparatively immature nation and one which has the complexity of our own: the youth and homogeneity of the surviving population, the fact that there are no obstacles in the way of identifying themselves with their nation, the absence of a history of economic friction, and the fact that rebuilding for them is a more tangibly obvious affair than it is with us. However, in the absence of evidence, such speculation is valueless, but the problem is one of psychological importance. And when it comes to speculation, it may be said that I, myself, have been generalizing in too speculative a way about our own working classes. This I admit. I agree that all I have said requires verification, and indeed I would urge that if we intend to persuade the working classes to work harder and not to strike, we must first find out whether I am right, or, if I am quite wrong, what are the facts of the case. That is why I have stressed a study of conscious purposes; I feel that much of our propaganda cuts no ice whatever, because it is

formulated in complete ignorance of what working men and women think and feel about their work.

When it comes to speculation about a possible future, we are indeed at sea. It may be that with a deepening crisis and experienced privation a different situation will confront us, eliciting different responses, perhaps an abject submission to a leader with all that that implies. Before we accept such a future as inevitable, there is, I think, one more thing to say. I have stressed the *difficulties* of achieving an integrated personality centred round desirable selfless purposes. I painted a black picture, and perhaps one too black. There is, however, one aspect of human conduct of which we should never lose sight, and that is the need people feel to justify their actions in terms of justice. Even the crude: "You've got to look after number one because no one else will," is a weighing of a claim. Strikers may justify their action by the weighing of a neglected claim. I venture to suggest that when claims are issues for the first time, and taken seriously for the first time, they are bound to bulk over-large in the eyes of the claimants. The point is that an element of assessment takes place. I am, you see, suggesting a feature which accompanies and softens the crude self-seeking which is first noticed, and in that, I think, lies our hope. My experience has been that the sophisticated protest that no one but a fool would do more than the minimum is accompanied by a certain uneasiness: the claims of others are not wholly disregarded, though they may well be underestimated. I think that our hopes may lie in the extension of this sense of fairness to other people, supposing our economic predicament gives us time. Of a so-called "change of heart" I am sceptical. Of a recrudescence of religious belief I am sceptical, because I very much doubt whether the majority of men deduce what course of action they should pursue from a set of beliefs about the nature of the Universe and man's place in it. Of blind enthusiasm I am positively afraid. I have, however, a certain respect for the efficacy of the human reason as an agency engaged in the making of choices, though I am only too well aware of the sectional interests against which it has to fight. One of the main obstacles to rationality, and one of great psychological interest, is the frequent absence of any common ground for rational discussion. Disagreement is naturally common enough, but disagreement implies discussability. What I am referring to is that one sometimes finds oneself in an atmosphere in which discussion itself is impossible—a world of counter-utterances and *ignoratio elenchi*—a world in which the general rules of evidence and inference simply are not. If this is merely a first stage of articulateness, well and good, but if it goes deeper than that we are, indeed, sunk. In any case, I am sure that our propagandists would do well to take note of the problem.

What I have attempted to do is to suggest that the moral problems

of our time centre round the multiplicity of choices with which we are confronted, and to emphasize the need for psychological research into the way in which these choices are consciously faced by the people who have to make them. I am convinced that psychologists can only contribute to the solution of our moral problems if they do some field-work among men and women in industry and elsewhere, as well as developing ingenious hypothesis which are often—so it seems to me—based on comparatively little evidence.

"THINKING AND MEANING"[1]

PROFESSOR H. H. PRICE.

PROFESSOR AYER'S lecture is not only a most auspicious inauguration; it is also an important contribution to philosophy. It is perhaps the best and the most exciting work he has written, and that is saying a good deal. There is a certain theory about thought and its objects which is often hinted at in the utterances and the writings of contemporary empiricist philosophers, but so far as I know it has never before been stated in print. Mr. Ayer has stated it, clearly and in detail, with all his well-known force and felicity of style. It is a strange and rather shocking theory, very different (in appearance at any rate) from the one which most philosophers hitherto have believed. But if we are shocked by it, the shock will be salutary. The dragon has at last come clearly into view. If we resolve to accustom ourselves to it and treat it kindly, we may hope that it will transform itself by degrees into a nice gentle domestic pet, as other philosophical dragons have before.

The aim of the lecture is to discover what is meant by the statement "someone is thinking." Professor Ayer begins by formulating what he calls the most widely current view, according to which the situation described by this statement contains five different factors: (1) the person who is thinking; (2) the instrument with which he thinks, the mind or, in some versions of the theory, the brain; (3) the process of thought itself, consisting of mental acts of various kinds; (4) the medium in which he thinks, images or words; (5) the object of the thought. Mr. Ayer considers that this analysis is far too complicated, and he proposes to simplify it by getting rid of the unnecessary entities which it mentions. By the time he has done with it, only two of the original five items are left: (1) the person, and (4) the medium. The other three have been analysed away. Even the object of thought is got rid of in the end, though for a time it maintains a precarious existence as the *significatum* of the words or images which constitute (4). As for item (1), the person who thinks, I take it that this would ultimately be resolved into a logical construction out of mental events (including organic sensations); though it is not relevant to Mr. Ayer's purpose to say so. And then there would be nothing left of our original five items but a series of mental events, some of which are symbols.

[1] Professor A. J. Ayer's Inaugural Lecture, published by H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd., London. 1947. Pp. 28. 2s. 6d. net.

The first unnecessary entity to be removed is (2) the mind, the supposed instrument with which one thinks. Professor Ayer does not of course deny that there are mental events. Their distinguishing character, he says, is that they are private,[1] and that they are not located in physical space; for example, feelings and images are mental events (p. 4). But he does deny that there is any entity, called the mind, which "underlies" such events. Even if there were, he says, it could not be the instrument with which one thinks; not because we think with something else, but because the question "What does one think with?" is a misleading question. One may ask what we see with, or hear with; and one may properly answer, with our eyes or our ears. But if somebody asks the parallel question about thinking, the proper reply is that in this case there is no "with" at all. Thus the notion that there is a kind of charlady, called the mind, which does people's thinking for them, is a delusion. And the notion that there is something called a thinking faculty which does it—or that there are faculties at all—is only a more refined form of the same delusion (pp. 5–7).

Now it seems to me that we do sometimes use the word "mind" in something like the sense which Mr. Ayer objects to. We say, for example, that Jones has a good mind, or a first-class mind, or a powerful mind; and it would be agreed that such statements are sometimes true. What are we to make of them? In view of what he says later, I think Mr. Ayer should reply that "the mind" in this usage refers to our capacity for using symbols, a capacity partly innate and partly acquired. Some people are very good at using symbols, and they are said to "have good minds"; others are less good at it. A capacity, to be sure, is not something which one uses as one uses a pair of tongs, or even as one uses one's eyes. To suppose that it is, was just the mistake of the Faculty Psychologists. But still it is something which one *has*, in an intelligible sense of the word "have." Nor is it altogether true that in the case of thinking there is no "with" at all—nothing "with which" we think. It is natural to say that we think with (by means of) symbols. A symbol, and still more a system of symbols such as the Arabic numerals, surely *is* something which we use, though not just in the way we use a pair of tongs. Lastly, I think that Mr. Ayer's attack on faculties is somewhat overdone. As we shall see, he has a good deal to say about *dispositions* in the later part of his lecture. A faculty is nothing but an innate or unacquired disposition. Can it be denied that every human being does have unacquired dispositions? For example, the disposition to learn from experience cannot itself be learned from experience.

[1] Private *to whom* or to what? If one holds that persons are logical constructions, this question will demand some consideration.

We may now turn to items (3) and (4) on our list: the process of thought, on the one hand; on the other, the symbols which are supposed to be its "medium." Professor Ayer is inclined to identify the two. He admits that people *may* sometimes have thoughts which they are unable to express. But this admission does not amount to much. For as he explains later (p. 10) such thoughts, precisely because they are unsymbolized, would have no objects. If so, one wonders how they can be thoughts at all. Mr. Ayer does not tell us how they can be. Perhaps he really holds that they are feelings which have a tendency to cause thoughts, without actually being thoughts themselves? However this may be, he does explicitly maintain that when a thought *is* expressed, i.e. symbolized, "the expressing and the thinking merge into a single process" (p. 7). Indeed, this is one of the central contentions of the whole lecture.

It might be supposed that Mr. Ayer is here identifying thinking with talking, or with other sorts of overt symbol-using, e.g. writing, making gestures, making signals. But surely we often think without expressing our thoughts by speech, writing or gestures? Moreover, when we do speak, surely there is a distinction between talking *without* thinking and talking *with* thinking (likewise when we write, gesticulate, etc.)? But those objections would be unfair. As to the first, we must distinguish between private and public symbol-usings. Certainly we may think without uttering public noises, or making public marks on paper, or public gestures. But we are still using symbols privately. For example, we may be talking to ourselves subvocally. Or we may be using verbal imagery, whether auditory or visual or kinaesthetic. Or we may even be using non-verbal imagery, as when I think of Paddington Station by means of a visual image resembling a view of that object from the south-west. (Mr. Ayer does admit that such pictorial images may be symbols, though he says very little about them.)

As to the second objection, we might be tempted to suppose that when we talk intelligently—not like a parrot or a gramophone—there are two distinct processes going on: first an inward process of thinking, and then an outward process of noise-making which is somehow controlled by it. To this Mr. Ayer would reply, like the philosophical child who was told that she must always think before she spoke, "But how can I know what I think until I hear what I say?" Of course people do sometimes think before they speak. "But all this comes to is that before saying certain words aloud they say them to themselves." A person's conversation may be "interspersed with private rehearsals" (p. 8). But they too are symbol-usings, though private ones. Are we to say that they in turn are interspersed with second-order rehearsals which are still more private? Surely not; and if we did, we could not avoid a vicious infinite regress, because these

second-order rehearsals would themselves be symbol-usings. At some stage or other we must come upon a symbol-using process which is *un*rehearsed, i.e. to the using of symbols without the help of any previous use of symbols to "prepare" it. Then why not admit the obvious empirical fact that our public symbol-usings too are very largely unrehearsed? In other words, Mr. Ayer is pointing out that we do not just think and then produce our symbols afterwards. We think *in* producing them. And this is true whether the symbols produced are public or private.

But of course it might be suggested that there are still two distinct processes, even though concurrent: talking on the one hand (whether public or private) and thinking on the other. If the second is absent, am I not talking like a parrot after all? And if my parrot-talk happens to be private and consists entirely of auditory or kinaesthetic images, that will not make it any better. To this Mr. Ayer roundly answers that there are not two distinct processes at all. The best way to formulate his view, perhaps, is to use some adverbial expression like "thinkingly." According to him, we do not talk and at the same time perform some separate activity called thinking. We just talk thinkingly, or intelligently, whereas a parrot does not. Or we may put it the other way round and say we think verbally. At any rate, he holds that we are not producing words *and* doing something else as well. We are just producing words in a certain manner: in an intelligent or understanding way.

This brings us to the next and most devastating slash of Professor Ayer's razor, the abolition of *objects* of thought (item 5 in the traditional list with which we began). For I suppose that the main reason why philosophers have wanted to say there are acts of thinking, as well as utterances, was not that they professed to discover such acts by introspection. It was rather that when talking, privately or publicly, they claimed to have certain objects "before their minds," over and above the words; and from this they concluded that there must be certain acts of awareness directed upon such objects. Mr. Ayer will not have this at all. Instead, he suggests that all this theorizing about objects of thought is just a misleading way of telling us that symbols have meaning. "To say of a thought that it has an object is merely another way of saying that certain symbols are meaningful" (p. 11). This is perhaps the most exciting suggestion in Mr. Ayer's lecture. It is one of these suggestions which seem so obvious, once they are stated, that we wonder why nobody has ever put it in quite that way before; and this, I think, is one of the marks of true philosophical originality. It is clear that if Mr. Ayer is right, many of the epistemological problems which have plagued philosophers for centuries will simply vanish away.

He proceeds to explain very well what different sorts of symbols mean in different ways; for example, names in one way, descriptions in another. But what if the symbols are meaningless, like those alleged to have been used by Jacob Boehme when he described the unutterable? The objects of *his* thought "cannot be identified with what that relevant symbols designate, for the reason that they do not designate anything" (p. 12). One would expect Mr. Ayer to conclude that Boehme was not thinking at all, i.e. was talking unthinkingly; in which case there would be no need to ask what objects his thoughts had. This, I believe, is what Mr. Ayer would have said in the old days, when he was crusading against the metaphysicians. But he has now become more tender-hearted. He is prepared to admit that such expressions as "the Absolute" are not exactly nonsensical. He says "we have a use" for this expression, "in the sense that there are certain sentences in which it is allowed to have a place" (p. 12). Moreover, such sentences can be translated; there are other sentences, in the same or another language, which are equivalent to them. He adds that there are certain others in which the expression is *not* allowed to have a place. It would be against the rules to say "the Absolute is going short of food" (i.e. this really *would* be nonsense), though it would be in accordance with them to say "it transcends human reason." So we may allow that such expressions are "quasi-symbols" and that the sentences in which they occur express "quasi-propositions." But Mr. Ayer still insists firmly that such sentences are neither true nor false; hence the prefix "quasi-". I think this is because the rules for the use of such words as "the Absolute" are merely rules for joining those words to others, or forbidding them to be joined, and neither are nor are reducible to rules of the ostensive kind (though Mr. Ayer does not explicitly say so). I must confess to an uneasy suspicion that in this important respect they are rather like the syntactical symbols of Logic and Mathematics, such as "or" and "plus."

But we have not yet finished with objects of thought. Our thinkings are ordinarily of the kind which is expressed in a complete sentence, not in a single word or phrase. Mr. Ayer therefore proceeds to discuss what Lord Russell calls "propositional attitudes"—knowing, believing, wondering, doubting, etc. The traditional view is that each of these words stands for an act, or occurrence, and that these acts have objects. Here again Mr. Ayer proceeds to abolish both the acts and the objects. He first points out that in ordinary English the words "know," "believe," "doubt," etc., are *dispositional* words. If we say of someone "he believes that p" we do not ordinarily mean that he is at present engaged in an act called believing. What, then, do we mean? According to Mr. Ayer, we are making a series of hypothetical statements about what the man *would* do *if* he were in circum-

stances to which the truth of *p* was relevant, about the words he would utter if asked whether *p*, or some proposition entailed by *p*, is true, about the emphatic tone of voice in which we would utter them, etc. To take Mr. Ayer's own example: suppose one believes that the Labour Party will be returned to power at the next election. Then believing this consists in being disposed to utter these words when the subject arises, and generally in "behaving [being disposed to behave?] in a way that, in the relevant situations, is more likely to be successful if the prediction is true than if it is not" (p. 15), where "behaving" of course includes the production of various sorts of public symbols, and I think it *should* also include the formulating of them sub-vocally, and even in images (though this last is oddly called "behaviour").

This is only the beginning of Mr. Ayer's analysis, but I should like to make some comments on it at once. Suppose I am asked, not "is *p* true?" (Mr. Ayer has provided for that), but "do you believe *p*?" How shall I answer? According to this analysis, I shall only be entitled to reply, "I *think* I believe it." I cannot say more than that. For according to Mr. Ayer I cannot discover by direct inspection what my own beliefs are. I learn that I myself believe *p* exactly as I learn that other people believe it, by an inductive process; by observing what I say and what I do in circumstances to which the truth of *p* is relevant,[1] and thence inferring a general rule about my utterances and actions. And the induction may well be a pretty weak one. For circumstances of the required sort may not occur at all frequently; for example, they occur very seldom with regard to the belief that the sun is larger than the moon, unless the believer happens to be an astronomer. I can indeed be pretty sure that I do have a disposition to *say* "*p*" (or some equivalent sentence) and to say it emphatically. I can at any time perform the experiment of asking myself the question "whether *p*" even though no one else happens to ask me. But although this disposition is a part of the belief-disposition on Mr. Ayer's view, it is far from being the whole. There must also be dispositions to perform various actions, and perhaps to feel certain emotions also, for example, to feel shocked to the core if I read the sentence "not *p*" in the newspaper. I may *think* that I should act and feel thus if occasion arose, but I may very easily be mistaken; and therefore I can only think—not know—that

[1] Should this be "to which I *believe* the truth of *p* to be relevant"? If I mistakenly believe it to be relevant when in fact it is not, I shall talk and act in the required way. If I mistakenly believe it not to be relevant when in fact it is, I shall not speak or act in this way. But if so, the analysis seems to be circular. There is a similar difficulty about the phrase "likely to be successful" at the end of the previous paragraph. What matters is that I should *believe*, however irrationally, that the behaviour is likely to be successful.

I have the belief in question. Now there are two difficulties about this. One is that the word "think" is itself a synonym for "believe" (or "believe mildly"). And secondly, it seems obvious that we do sometimes know by inspection what our beliefs are. At any rate, almost all philosophers hitherto have supposed so. They have admitted, of course, that we often do not know whether *p* is in fact true. But, they have claimed, we know at least that we do believe *p*. Even the wildest sceptic, it is supposed, must admit that he can at least know this much, merely by attending to his own state of mind. He cannot, of course, know that he will *go on* believing *p* in future—though he may think he will, he may easily be mistaken—but at least he can know that he does believe it now.

Have philosophers been wholly wrong in making this claim? They have claimed in effect that there are *acts* of believing, and that these acts are sometimes detectable by introspection. Well, perhaps these acts should not be called acts of *believing*. The phrase is a technical one, and we may admit that the word "belief" is ordinarily used in a dispositional sense. Let us speak, instead, of acts of *assenting*, as Locke did. It seems to me clear that there are such acts (or occurrences, if the word "act" is too much to swallow), and that we are sometimes directly aware of them by introspection. And they are not just acts of utterance either, not even of emphatic utterance. For I may utter something emphatically when I am lying, or in a merely playful or dramatic manner.

But this is not the whole story. I think there *are* beliefs to which Mr. Ayer's dispositioned analysis, or something like it, does apply very well. They are what we call "unconscious" beliefs, i.e. beliefs such that their holder cannot know by introspection that he has them, and may even think erroneously that he does not have them. If we nevertheless say that he does have them, I think we are talking about the dispositions manifested in his utterances and his actions; and likewise in the images, dreams, day-dreams, emotions and the hallucinations (if any) which he experiences (for I do not think that the dispositions in question are so entirely behaviouristic as Mr. Ayer would have them). Moreover, I discover my own unconscious beliefs —when I do manage to discover them—in very much the same way as I discover the unconscious beliefs of my neighbour: by observing what I myself say, feel and do, especially when I am off my guard, and then drawing the appropriate inferences. What is wrong with Mr. Ayer's dispositional analysis, then, is this: he has supposed that what is true of "unconscious" beliefs is true of all beliefs, or that "unconscious" beliefs are the only ones there are. And in this he seems to be mistaken.

These objections are not considered by Mr. Ayer. We may now turn to one which he does consider (p. 15–16). If I believe *p*, must I

not sometimes actually *think of p*? Must I not have done so at least once in the past? For otherwise the dispositions, in which my belief is supposed to consist, could never have been formed. And when I did think of *p* on that occasion, must I not have thought of it with a *feeling of confidence?* If I had not thought of it with this feeling, but with some other one, e.g. a feeling of suspicion, or with none at all, the resulting disposition would not have been a belief-disposition. But this would amount to saying that there can be no belief-disposition without a previous *act* of believing (what I called an act of assenting above). Mr. Ayer replies that he is not himself sure that there is any feeling which can properly be called a feeling of confidence. It seems to me clear that there sometimes is; though of course it is not an organic sensation like a stomach-ache, and if anybody wants to identify all feelings with organic sensations, he must call this one by another name, such as "enjoyed attitude" or the like. In general, Mr. Ayer appears to hold that the question how a particular belief disposition originated in a purely psychological one, of no epistemological importance (p. 15, *ad fin.*). But if this be said, what becomes of the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable beliefs? This is not the same as the distinction between belief and knowledge, which we shall come to presently; a perfectly reasonable belief may still be false. It is clear that the word "reasonable" is not a purely psychological adjective. But it is equally clear that when we call a belief reasonable we are saying something about the way the disposition was set up. We are saying that it was set up by a certain sort of cognitive act, or series of acts; namely, by considering the evidence in favour of *p* and the evidence against it, and then deciding or making up our mind in accordance with the balance of the evidence. A belief *not* formed in this way is unreasonable, or at any rate non-reasonable, even though what is believed may happen to be true. It is very odd that Mr. Ayer says nothing at all about the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable beliefs.

We now turn to knowledge. This, too, is a disposition, not an act, according to Professor Ayer. He is inclined to think that on its subjective side it does not differ from belief. At any rate, he maintains, the actions, utterances, etc., which are its occurrent manifestations do not differ from those which manifest belief. But in other ways, he says, there is an important difference. First, a man cannot be said to know that *p*, unless *p* is in fact true, whereas what we believe may be either true or false. Secondly, in this case it is essential to ask how the disposition was acquired. We shall only say that the man knows, if the disposition was acquired "either as a result of having some experiences which justify *p*, or of his accepting certain other propositions which constitute evidence for *p* and are themselves directly or

indirectly justified by his experience" (p. 19). In the second clause I think Mr. Ayer should have said "constitute *conclusive* evidence for *p*" or "evidence sufficient to *establish p*" (not merely sufficient to make it more probable than not). Otherwise we shall not be able to distinguish between knowledge and reasonable belief which falls short of knowledge. But what are we to think of those "experiences which justify *p*"? They look to me very like what old-fashioned philosophers, in their ignorance and insensitivity to English idiom, have called "acts of knowing"! If this phrase is barred, let us call them acts of *noticing* or *discovering* instead. To put the same point another way, Mr. Ayer's word "justify" is a somewhat tricky one. If I have a certain sort of series of sense-experiences, of seeing a table from various sides and from different distances, bumping into it, etc., then the proposition that there is a table in the room will be "justified" in one sense of the word; in the sense that if those sense-experiences did occur and were sufficiently numerous and varied, and inter-related in certain ways, then the proposition that there is a table is as a matter of fact certain. But do I thereby *know* that there is a table? Not necessarily. My whole attention might be occupied in composing a sonata. It is not enough that I do in fact have those "justifying" experiences. It is also necessary that I should *notice* them or inspect them, or recognize them (I am tempted to say "know that they are occurring," but I had better forbear). Nor will it be enough if I notice them one by one. I must remember the earlier ones when the later ones are occurring. And finally—or is this too shocking?—I must perform the act which Kant called "synthesis" upon the whole lot; at any rate, I must *notice* that the contents of these successive experiences are related to each other in a certain systematic way, and it will not be enough that they are *in fact* thus related. I suggest that when we inquire into the origins of a knowledge-disposition, we shall always find that it originated in one or more acts of "noticing" or "discovering" or "recognizing." I have to put it like that, because Mr. Ayer forbids me to call them acts of knowing. But that is what they always used to be called before the year 1930; and if I were not so timid, I should like to call them that still. At any rate, whatever you call them, they are certainly *occurrences*. And it is not enough to say just that they are experiences, as Mr. Ayer does.

But what about "knowledge of"—knowledge by acquaintance as opposed to "knowledge that"? Mr. Ayer is very severe about this. No doubt the verb "to know" does sometimes govern an accusative, which is, or appears to be, the name of an entity of some kind. But in every case, he says, it can be shown that this alleged knowing of an entity is reducible either to knowing how to do something, or else to knowing that something is the case (p. 18). Now I admit that it

may be misleading to speak of *knowledge* by acquaintance; and sometimes, as when we say "he knows the way to the station" or "he knows Latin," we do mean that he knows how to do something—how to get to the station, or how to translate Latin sentences. All the same, I think that the word "acquaintance," even though not the phrase "knowledge by acquaintance," is a useful one; and I do not see how we can get on without it, or some equivalent (Mr. Ayer's own equivalent is "experience"). Moreover, even though acquaintance is not itself knowledge, it does seem to be an indispensable precondition of knowledge *that* so and so is the case, at any rate where the knowledge is empirical.

We may now turn to consider Mr. Ayer's views about what is known; we must remember that "knowledge" is now restricted to knowledge *that*, since knowledge by acquaintance has been abolished. It used to be said, in the old Realistic days, that "facts" are what we know. Mr. Ayer is very severe about facts too, and here his severity seems to be just. We do not want two worlds—the ordinary world of things and events, and another world of facts existing or subsisting alongside of it. Of course we may use the word "fact" if we like; in ordinary English we often do. "But," says Mr. Ayer, "it is a mistake to think of the facts as being 'out there' waiting to be known. For what is to be regarded as a fact will depend partly on what symbols we use" (p. 20). Partly, but of course not wholly. It will also depend upon "certain non-symbolic occurrences" (*ibid*). In other words, when we talk of "a fact," we are really referring to a certain relational property which these non-symbolic occurrences have, the property of rendering a certain sentence true and other sentences false; and we are not referring to a peculiar entity, which somehow exists or subsists alongside of the non-symbolic occurrences. But then, I would add, there *is* after all something "out there"; and if it is not "waiting to be known," it is at any rate waiting to render our sentences true or false; and probably this is all that the Realistic philosophers wanted when they said—ill-advisedly—that facts themselves were out there and waiting to be known.

We now come to Section V of Professor Ayer's lecture (pp. 20–25). The issues which he raises here are so interesting and so important that they cannot be dismissed in a paragraph or two. I intend to discuss them in some detail; though I am afraid this will leave me no time to discuss the last section of all (pp. 25–28), in which even the attenuated ghost of the object—the shadowy status which it still had as that *significatum* of a symbol—is finally dissolved. (Mr. Ayer there maintains that to say "what a symbol means" is merely to interpret it in terms of *other symbols*, but denies that we are thereby "imprisoned in language" as some philosophers have supposed.)

As we have seen, the main purpose of the lecture is to abolish the act-object relation. Mr. Ayer is trying to convince us that when we talk about acts of knowing, believing, doubting, etc., we are really referring to dispositions; and that when we talk about the objects of such acts, we are really referring to the fact that symbols have meaning. But it may be objected, he says, "that the use of symbols which are meaningful is itself just such a mental occurrence as I am trying to eliminate. . . . It is necessary that the signs in question should be taken to refer to something. And must not these objects of reference be apprehended by the mind?" (p. 21). If so, the fact that symbols are meaningful cannot be used to abolish the act-object relation; for whenever a symbol is meaningfully employed, the act-object reliation must already be there.

I think that this is the most formidable objection which Mr. Ayer has to meet; and he himself admits that it is not easy to answer. Obviously there is some difference "between talking intelligently and merely babbling" and likewise "between understanding what another person says and merely hearing the noises that he makes" (p. 21). But what makes the difference? Not the presence or absence of any cognitive act. For what sort of cognitive act could it be? Not an act of imaging. It is empirically false that images are always present when we use symbols with understanding (p. 21). And even if they were, it would not help; for such images "must themselves be symbols if they are to do the work required of them" (*ibid*). I do not wish to defend the Imagist theory of thinking, but I doubt whether Mr. Ayer has done full justice to it. Its advocates would say that the images here in question are *natural* symbols, whereas words are only conventional ones; and this, they would insist, makes all the difference. They would admit that images are not always present, but would say that when they are absent we are using words in an *uncashed* manner, merely as substitutes or counters, which we might —or might not—be able to cash with images on demand.

But to continue. Mr. Ayer agrees that if I am to understand a symbol, I must in some sense "know what it stands for." But this, he says, does not imply that anything is actually going on in my mind. It implies only that I have certain dispositions or capacities. Thus if I understand a sentence which I am uttering or hearing, I am capable of describing the situations which would make my sentence true (i.e. of substituting other equivalent sentences for the present one), and I am capable of recognizing such situations when and if they turn up. I am *capable* of doing these things, but I am not actually doing anything now, over and above the uttering of—or listening to—the words themselves.

Likewise, when I talk intelligently (whether in public or in private), I certainly "know what I am saying." But this knowing again, accord-

ing to Mr. Ayer, is not a cognitive process or activity independent of the saying, and occurring alongside of it. If it were, it would itself involve the intelligent use of symbols; and then we should have an infinite regress, as we have seen already (p. 22). A similar difficulty would arise if we said that when I talk intelligently, I *intend* to make the noises I do make. For such intending, if regarded as a separate act, would itself be a piece of symbol-using. No; my knowing what I am saying is not this sort of thing at all, according to Mr. Ayer. It is not any sort of cognitive process concurrent with—still less preceding—my utterances. On the contrary, it is "something for which the criteria are to be sought in my *behaviour*. It consists in the way in which I formulate the signs, or in the tone in which I express myself, or in my being able subsequently to recall what I have said, or in the way in which I make my discourse hang together" (p. 22; my italics). I think that Mr. Ayer's use of the word "behaviour" here is a little odd. (Or perhaps the trouble is that Dr. Watson has spoilt the word for us.) Recalling what one has previously said is not what most people would call "behaviour." It is surely a cognitive act, if anything is. And what about "the way I make my discourse hang together"? This can be called behaviour if my discourse is a public one which I speak aloud, or write on paper or on a blackboard. But my discourse might be private, conducted entirely in auditory or kinaesthetic images; and yet I may make it hang together quite well. Would this be behaviour even in the most elastic and pre-Watsonian sense of the word?

Professor Ayer now considers another objection. It might be argued that even though no special sort of cognitive *act* is needed, yet we cannot explain the intelligent use of symbols without introducing the notion of a persisting cognitive *state*: the one which the present writer has called "familiarity with universals" (p. 23). I think that this, or something like this, is what any old-fashioned philosopher would say when first confronted with a theory such as Mr. Ayer's. He might not mind so very much about "acts." But he *would* want to say that in order to use symbols with understanding, it is not enough to have dispositions of various kinds, nor yet to be actually behaving in various ways, nor both together: one must be actually *aware* of something. And this something, it would be said, is certainly not just the symbols themselves, not even if they are mental images; it is what is variously called a universal, or a concept or an abstract idea—or a set of those, as the case may be. It would further be said that Mr. Ayer's adverb "intelligently" covers two different things which he has not distinguished—namely skill on the one hand, and understanding on the other. One may use words or other symbols skilfully, but this (it would be said) is not the same as using them with understanding. The two things may go together.

They certainly do in Mr. Ayer himself; perhaps that is why it has not occurred to him to distinguish them! But they do not always go together. One may use words very clumsily, with very little dexterity, as most of us frequently do; and yet one may be using them with understanding. And if one does, it is because one "has one's eye on the object," as we say; that is, because the concepts which the words refer to are actually before one's mind. On the other hand, a man may talk or write very skilfully without "having his eye on the object" at all, though he may have had his eye on it long ago, when his skill in word-concatenation was being acquired.

These are the objections which Mr. Ayer has to meet. Let us now consider his reply to them. He is quite willing to let people talk about "familiarity with universals" if they like. Since class-symbols do have a meaning, we may if we please introduce the word "universal" as a way of referring indefinitely to what they mean (p. 23 *fin.*). For example, it is a fact that some things are yellow; so we can say, if we like, that there is a universal called yellowness. The objection to this way of speaking, in Mr. Ayer's view, is not that it is wrong, but that it is unilluminating. "We do not in any way *explain* the fact that some things are yellow by saying that they are instances of the universal 'yellow.' . . . We merely re-state it in a more mystifying way" (p. 24, my italics). Again, "it is not *because* I am familiar with the universal 'manhood' that I am able to think, or talk intelligently, about men. My familiarity with this universal just consists in the fact that I am able to use the word 'man' correctly" (*ibid.*, my italics). And this ability in turn consists partly in being able to combine the word with other words in accordance with the conventional rules for its use; and partly in being able to apply the word to the appropriate objects when and if I observe them—in other words, in "being able to recognize a man when I see one."

Now what does Mr. Ayer mean by the words "explain" and "because" which I have italicized? What is he complaining of when he says that this talk about universals such as "yellowness" does not explain the fact that some things are yellow, but merely restates it in a more mystifying way; and likewise that this talk about being familiar with universals does not explain the intelligent use of symbols? Is he asking for a *causal* explanation of these two things? But of course that is not what these philosophers are offering him. They are offering him a philosophical analysis of the proposition "some things are yellow," and of the proposition "the symbol 'yellow' is being used intelligently." Mr. Ayer complains that they have merely re-stated the facts in a more mystifying way. A cynic might comment that this is just what philosophical analysis consists in ("He told us what everybody knew in words that nobody could

understand"). Of course the cynic would not be altogether right. But I am afraid we must admit that words like "clear" and "illuminating," with their contraries "obscure" and "mystifying", have something *relative* in their meaning. What is clarifying for one philosopher may perfectly well be mystifying for another. What you find mystifying depends on what you find *un*mystifying to start with. To Mr. Ayer the fact that we use symbols meaningfully is not at all mysterious, or not much. So when other people try to re-describe this fact in quite a different terminology—e.g. by talking about awareness of universals—they seem to him to be substituting a mystery for something which was initially *un*mysterious. But with old-fashioned philosophers it is the other way round. To them, the existence of conceptual cognition—the conceiving of concepts, or universals or abstract ideas—does not appear mysterious, or not very; whereas the fact that we use noises, marks, etc., to "refer to" what we do not at the moment feel or see does appear very mysterious indeed. They therefore proceed to clarify what is, to them, more mysterious in terms of what is, to them, less so. They analyse symbolic reference in terms of awareness of universals. And it will not do for Mr. Ayer to reply that at any rate his starting point is more empirical than theirs. For it is an empirical fact that conceptual cognition occurs, however you analyse it; just as it is an empirical fact that the meaningful use of symbols occurs, however you analyse it.

If there is anything in this line of thought, it should be possible to show that the two analyses (Professor Ayer's and the traditional one) are not so different as they look. They look different because their starting-points really are different; what is initially mysterious to the one party is initially unmysterious to the other, and *vice versa*. But if both analyses were fully worked out, should they not meet in the middle? Neither of them, perhaps, has been fully worked out as yet. Still, it should be possible, even now, to see that they "converge" towards agreement despite differences in terminology and emphasis. Can this be seen? Perhaps it might be, if we reflected a little more on the key notion of Mr. Ayer's analysis, the notion of a disposition or capacity; and especially on the capacity for *recognizing*, e.g. our ability "to recognize a man when we see one."

The trouble with Mr. Ayer's account of the meaningful use of symbols—or rather the incompleteness of it—lies in this: the dispositions in which knowledge of the meaning of a symbol is to consist are, as it were, placed side by side, without any explanation of the relations between them. My knowledge of the meaning of the word W consists of a number of *different* dispositions: the capacity to recognize objects of which W is (for me) the name; the capacity

to combine it with other words into sentences which make sense; to utter or to image other sentences equivalent to these, or entailed by them; the capacity to give a nominal definition of W, or at any rate to accept a good nominal definition offered by other people, and to reject a bad one; the capacity to produce images or pictures on paper which will "cash" that word so far as images and pictures can, and to correct them if they are inadequate; the capacity (with some words) to produce actual "real life" instances which cash the word, as I could do with the word "walk" and as a golfer could do with the phrase "mashie-shot"; the capacity to perform appropriate actions, both utterances and others, when an object of which W is for me the name is perceived and noticed by me. Not all these dispositions are indispensable, of course. I could know the meaning of the word "man" even if I had no visual imagery and could not draw pictures. But some of them, and I think a pretty large sub-group of them, must exist in me if I know the meaning of a word.

It will be seen that I have mentioned more dispositions than Mr. Ayer has; but I think he would accept my list, and very likely he would agree that it could be made still longer. Now the various acts to which these dispositions dispose us are just what old-fashioned philosophers would call "occurrent manifestations of our awareness of a universal"; and Mr. Ayer might agree to call them "occurrent manifestations of our knowledge of the meaning of a word." Where is the difference? It is this. The old-fashioned philosopher would say that one of those dispositions is fundamental and the others derivative. He would say that all the others *depend upon* the capacity to recognize instances. If we did not have this, we obviously could not produce the images, pictures, models or "real-life" instances, which cash the word in question; nor could we perform the intelligent actions which are appropriate in the presence of the object. For example, I could not intelligently open a door if I did not recognize that it was one. More important still, the capacity to combine the word W with other words into sentences, phrases, etc., which make sense, the capacity to produce other symbols equivalent to it, in short the capacity to operate with the word in the *absence* of perceived instances—all this likewise depends on the capacity to recognize instances when they are present. It is true that even though we were unable to recognize instances where present, we might still be able to combine W with other words *as if* we understood it, just as a parrot can. We might have been very well-drilled in the requisite talking habits (or writing habits!) and our neighbours might not be able at once to detect our deficiency. But for all that we should not then be talking with understanding, and the word W would not be for us a symbol, but only a noise combinable with other noises which are.

Now Mr. Ayer has not himself said that the disposition to recognize instances is fundamental, and the other dispositions derivative. But I do not see why he should not. And if he did, he would have gone quite a long way to meet the "believers in universals"; so long as the universals they believe in are merely the mild and harmless *universalia in rebus* and not the transcendent universals of the Platonists.

He would have gone still further if he could be persuaded to modify his excessively Behaviouristic account of recognition itself ("The criteria for my recognizing an object lie wholly in my behaviour," p. 25). It is true that if I wish to discover whether *someone else* recognizes a door when he sees one, I shall have to examine his behaviour, including his utterances. But is this what I do when I wish to discover whether I myself am recognizing something? Do I observe the physical actions I am doing and the words I am uttering, and conclude "Oh, well, then it seems that I must be recognizing this object"? Surely not. And if I did, there would be a vicious infinite regress. For if it were a case of applying "criteria," must I not *recognize* that my own behaviour and utterances are of the sort which the criteria prescribe? Sooner or later we must come back to an act, or occurrence, which is not merely behaviour, but is irreducibly cognitive: an act of *noticing* or *becoming aware*—I dare not say "knowing"—that something is of a familiar sort, however the phrase "of a sort" is to be analysed. Then why not admit straight off that I just *notice* what sort of thing the particular object is, and that this is precisely what recognizing amounts to? It may be that the noticing never exists without expressing itself in some kind of behaviour or some kind of symbol-production, public or private. But it does exist nevertheless, and is something irreducibly cognitive. Moreover, it is something which *occurs* and has a data; it is not a disposition, but is the occurrent manifestation of one. Would Mr. Ayer feel happier if I called it an act of *verifying*, instead of recognizing? I will if he likes. To recognize something as being ϕ is nothing more nor less than verifying $\exists x \phi x$. Would he want to maintain that even verifying is to be analysed in a purely Behaviouristic way? I cannot believe that he would. Surely verifying is an irreducibly cognitive act if anything is?

But I should like to ask one further concession of him, which he may be more reluctant to make. He has assumed, I think, that at any given moment a disposition is either fully actualized, or else not actualized at all (i.e. entirely latent). It appears to me, on the contrary, that there are degrees of actualization. As some people have put it, a disposition may be *sub*-activated. It may manifest itself by influencing the course of our utterances or imagings or actions, although the conditions for its complete actualization are

not at the moment fulfilled. My capacity to recognize a man if I see one is not *fully* actualized until I do see one. Nevertheless, it does seem to exercise some control over the way I use the word "man" in absence. It exercises a kind of guidance—both positive and inhibitory—upon the way I combine this word with other words, upon my choice of equivalent words if demanded, and upon my acceptance or rejection of equivalents offered by others; when and so far as it does so, I am said—metaphorically—to be talking "with my eye on the object," or to know what I am talking about, but otherwise not. And finally it exercises a control or guidance upon my production of images or pictures on paper which partially "cash" the word. This, or something like this, is what is meant by saying that the capacity to recognize instances is sub-activated—though not completely actualized—when one uses a word in absence but with understanding. (It is the point which Hume made in his own way when he explained how the members of a class may be "present to the mind in power" even though not present in fact, and how we may avoid talking nonsense in the uncashed use of words which stand for very complex ideas.*) I should like to hope that Mr. Ayer could be induced to accept this point also. If he did, he would *almost* have met the "believers in universals" half-way.

[1] *Treatise*, Book I, part i, section 7, of "Abstract Ideas" (Selby-Bigge pp. 20, 23. Everyman, pp. 28, 31.)

ON THE FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATION OF FINITE CLASSICAL ARITHMETIC

G. J. WHITROW, M.A., D.Phil.

" 'Tell me, Protagoras,' he said, 'does a single grain of millet or the ten-thousandth part of a grain make any sound when it falls?' And when Protagoras said it did not, 'Then,' asked Zeno, 'does a bushel of millet make any sound when it falls or not?' Protagoras answered that it did, whereupon Zeno replied, 'But surely there is some ratio between a bushel of millet and a single grain or even the ten-thousandth part of a grain'; and when this was admitted, 'But then surely,' Zeno said, 'the ratios of the corresponding sounds to each other will be the same: for as the bodies which make the sounds are to one another, so will the sounds be to one another. And if this is so, and if the bushel of millet makes a sound, then the single grain of millet and the ten-thousandth part of a grain will make a sound.' This was the way Zeno used to put his questions"[1]

Despite the vast literature which has been devoted to the study and elucidation of Zeno's paradoxes, that of the millet seed appears to have been unduly neglected. Aristotle[2] dismissed the matter with the brief comment, "Therefore Zeno's argument is not true, for there is no part of a grain of millet that does not make a sound: for there is no reason why any such part should not in any length of time fail to move the air that the whole bushel moves in falling." More recently, the author of the article "Zeno of Elea," in the thirteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, remarked, "It is indeed difficult to understand how so acute a thinker . . . should neglect the imperfection of the organs of sense."

It is notorious that the paradoxes of Zeno have stubbornly defied all attempts at resolution. Both the tantalizing subtlety of the arguments and the profound importance of the problems raised have endowed these paradoxes with a phoenix-like character. The most famous, of course, are those concerning motion, in particular "Achilles and the Tortoise." They introduce the difficult concept of the infinite process. The "Millet Seed," however, does not involve this concept. For this reason most critics appear to be unaware of its subtlety and significance.

It seems to me that the core of this typical "threshold" paradox concerns the associated problems of "creation" and of "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Consequently, I believe that Zeno intended that his argument should be interpreted as follows.

[1] Simplicius, 1108. 18.

[2] Aristotle, *Physics*, H5,250 a19.

Logically, a non-zero magnitude cannot be generated by combining a finite number of zero magnitudes, "*ex nihilo nihil fit.*" Experientially, however, it appears that an audible sound can be produced by the combined effect of a finite number of inaudible sounds; in other words, "something" is produced by a *finite* set of "nothings." Thus there would appear to be a complete contradiction between reason and experience.

If I am right in this interpretation, the criticisms advanced by Aristotle and by the author of the article in the Encyclopaedia are beside the point. Their refutations are successful only against the shallower aspects of the paradox, for it can be regarded as existing at various "levels." Thus, Aristotle considered only the "dynamical level." Similarly, the author of the article in the Encyclopaedia considered only the "acoustic level." At these levels the paradox is trivial and of no interest. It becomes much more interesting and difficult at the "arithmetical level" considered by Zeno.

At this level, as I have already remarked, the problem concerns the creation of "something" out of a finite set of "nothings." The "sum" of a finite number of inaudible sounds is an audible sound, so that in this case the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The paradox at this level is thus clearly associated with the concept of "addition."

In a recent article[1] on "Mathematics and Tautology," I have re-examined the celebrated proposition discussed by Kant, that $7 + 5 = 12$. J. S. Mill believed that this statement is an empirical law of Nature. On the other hand, the logical positivists maintain that it is analytic; so that the contrary proposition, that seven plus five is not equal to twelve, would be self-contradictory. As I have shown, *in our present state of dubiety concerning the foundations of arithmetic*[2] this point of view is indisputable only if "twelve" is regarded merely as another *name* for "seven plus five"; but from this point of view mathematics is no more than a potentially endless catalogue of synonyms. Once we pass beyond this stage and attribute *meanings* to the various symbols, the character of the proposition becomes less obviously tautological.

What do we mean by "addition"? *What is the scope of the laws of finite arithmetic?* Until the nineteenth century it was assumed that there is only one logically possible system of geometry and one logically possible system of arithmetic and algebra. We now believe that both these assumptions were false. The existence of non-Euclidean geometries has long been well known. The existence of different types of arithmetic and algebra has become familiar only recently with the advent of quantum mechanics. In classical arith-

[1] Whitrow, *Polemic* (to appear).

[2] Cf. Weyl, *Am. Math. Monthly*, January 1946.

metic and algebra, we know that the sum of a finite number of objects is independent of the order of counting; and, in general, the act of counting is non-cyclic, so that for example an equation of the type,

$$a + a + a + \ldots + a = a,$$

where there is some definite number (greater than one) of a's on the right-hand side, is possible only if a is zero. Moreover, if a is zero, the equation *must* be satisfied.

Now, consider the bushel of falling millet seeds. Let the sound which is heard when one falls be denoted by a, the sound when two fall by $a + a$, and so on. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} a + a &= a, \\ a + a + a &= a, \\ \ldots & \ldots \end{aligned}$$

and so on, until finally we have for some definite number of additions,

$$a + a + a + \ldots + a > a.$$

The propositions, $a + a = a$, *etc.*, would appear to imply that a is zero. The proposition

$$a + a + a + \ldots + a > a,$$

would appear to be possible only if a is not zero. Hence, we get a contradiction or paradox, which can be resolved only by assuming that, in the present context, the symbols "a" and "$+$" do not obey the laws of classical arithmetic.

The lesson of Zeno's "Millet Seed" is now evident: *the laws of classical finite arithmetic are not appropriate to all objects of thought*; for in considering the auditory effect of dropping millet seeds, for example, it is clear that they do not apply. The total effect is greater than the classical arithmetic sum of the separate effects due to the dropping of each seed. We thus see that, so far from being one of the most trivial of Zeno's paradoxes, the "Millet Seed" is in fact one of the most fruitful; for it directs our attention to the fundamental problems of the meaning of the concept of addition, of the construction of various types of addition, and of discovering which types apply to which sets of objects. For example, granted, for the sake of argument, that $7 + 5 = 12$, irrespective of whether this proposition is analytic or synthetic, *a priori* or *a posteriori*, to what class of "objects" does it apply?

Consideration of Zeno's paradox suggests that the process of counting is intimately associated with the concept of time. If the bushel of millet seed is allowed to drop so that each seed falls at a different instant, and if these instants are not too close together, then no sound will be heard. Hence, in this case there will be no paradox and

no apparent violation of the laws of classical arithmetic. Hamilton,[1] Helmholtz,[2] and Brouwer[3] have all stressed the intimate relation between our construction of the system of integers and our intuition of time. As far as I know, none of them appear to have considered the relation between the time-factor and the *application* of arithmetic to objects. The "Millet Seed" suggests that the classical process of counting applies only to objects considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. Time does not enter into the *application* of classical arithmetic any more than into that of geometry. At first sight this statement may seem paradoxical. The addition process appears to take place in time. Nevertheless, ordinary counting has the characteristic property of a purely spatial concept; for, unlike the flow of time, it is reversible, so that the sum of a set of objects is independent of the *order* of counting. Moreover, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. Pegasus, Bucephalus and Incitatus[4] *are* three, although the first is mythical and the other two never co-existed. In general, classical arithmetic appears to apply to objects considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. However, even in this case there may be exceptions. For example, Whitehead[5] has drawn attention to a significant legend of the Council of Nicea. "When the bishops took their places upon the thrones they were 318; when they rose up to be called over, it appeared that they were 319; so that they never could make the number come right, and whenever they approached the last of the series he immediately turned into the likeness of his next neighbour." To bishops of this type it is clear that the classical process of counting does not apply; and as Whitehead has pointed out, "Whatever may be the historical worth of this story, it may safely be said that it cannot be disproved by deductive reasoning from the premisses of abstract logic," for "it is perfectly possible to imagine a universe in which any act of counting by a being in it annihilated some members of the class counted during the time and only during the time of its continuance."

The problem of applying classical arithmetic becomes more difficult when we turn from the summation of objects, regarded *sub specie aeternitatis*, to the summation of processes. In one sense, we can regard processes as similar to the three horses, but this is not the sense in which we usually want to regard them. Instead, we often require the sum of a set of processes to be equivalent to the resultant process. Thus, for example, the sum of the inaudible sounds produced by the falling seeds separately should be equivalent to the

[1] Hamilton, *Dublin Transactions*, XVII, II (1835).
[2] Helmholtz, "Von Zahlen und Messen" (Leipzig, 1887).
[3] Brouwer, *Bull. Am. Math. Soc.*, XX (1913).
[4] Suetonius, "Lives of the Caesars," IV, 55.
[5] Whitehead, "Mathematics," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th Edition.

sound produced by the bushel. Now, if the seeds fall separately at widely spaced epochs the resultant sound will be inaudible; on the other hand, it will be audible if the seeds fall simultaneously. Hence, in this case the sum of the individual processes of sound-production depends on the time-factor; and, because of this dependence, the addition of processes can, and in this case does, differ from the type of addition on which classical arithmetic is based.

Numbers can be considered either as static concepts or as processes.[1] In applying mathematics to physical phenomena, it is often necessary to consider numbers from the latter point of view. In this case, the ideas of addition and multiplication depend on the time-factor. Thus, if a number of processes occur simultaneously, it is often convenient to regard the resultant process as their "sum." If a number of processes occur consecutively, the resultant process is often regarded as their "product." The arithmetic and algebra of processes is not unique, and in particular can differ from arithmetic and algebra. For example, multiplication can be non-commutative, so that $b \times a$ is not the same as $a \times b$. Indeed, this feature characterized the first non-classical algebra, that of quaternions, invented by Hamilton in 1843. He discovered that, in the algebra of rotations about three mutually perpendicular axes in space, multiplication is non-commutative. Similarly, non-commutative addition can be illustrated by vector displacements in non-Euclidean space. In the case of those simultaneous processes the resultant of which is interpreted as their sum, addition is commutative; but, as the "Millet Seed" indicates, the classical rule,

$$0 + 0 + 0 + \ldots + 0 = 0,$$

is not always valid.

The situation arising when the simultaneous addition of a *finite* number, $n > n_0$, of zero magnitudes gives rise to a non-zero magnitude is a typical "threshold" phenomenon. Throughout the history both of natural science and of philosophy, men have continually sought to explain away the apparent creation of "something" out of "nothing." "There is nothing new under the sun" is the theme of most philosophers. Similarly, men of science are for ever seeking principles of permanence beneath the apparent flux of phenomena. Thus, they have evolved one conservation theorem after another. Nevertheless, knowledge as it grows continually overflows the moulds in which men seek to confine and shape it. The law of the conservation of energy, for example, in its classical dynamical form is valid only in conservative fields of force; in a more general form it was found necessary to include thermodynamic phenomena; and with the advent of Einstein's theory of relativity it was found neces-

[1] Whitrow, *op. cit.*

sary to include inertial mass. To-day the law can be retained in *all* known atomic processes only if the existence of the neutrino is postulated; so far, this appears to be a purely *ad hoc* concept with no observable properties. Similarly, in chemistry the indestructible atom of Dalton has had to be replaced by the radio-active atom of Rutherford; and in biology the changeless species of Linnaeus has been discarded for the changing species of Darwin and Mendel.

To the hyper-rational mind, "creation" appears to be inexplicable. Thus Zeno presumably resolved the paradox of the millet seed by denying the reality of the world of the senses. On the other hand, the followers of Bergson can resolve the paradox by rejecting the whole process of analysis, regarding each phenomenon as indivisible. Indeed, for them the paradox need never arise. But for men of science, who follow neither Zeno nor Bergson, the paradox is not resolved. Instead, we are made to realize the limitations of finite classical arithmetic.

PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

PHILOSOPHY IN ITALY

With the new development of physical science the problem of the revision of traditional epistemology becomes ever more acute. In an essay composed with great perspicacity Professor Luigi Scaravelli[1] poses the question whether the *Critique of Pure Reason*, based as it is on Newtonian physics and on the three-dimensional conception of space, is consistent with the views of the physics of relativity and quanta. Relativity, as Cassirer had already shown, offers much smaller difficulties to an attempt at reconciliation than does the quantum theory, which runs counter to the idea of the continuity of space-time schemes.

Scaravelli sees a possibility of reconciling the latter with the *Critique of Pure Reason*, showing that in both the idea of reality does not depend on the intuition of space-time, but inheres directly in sensation, as a "degree of intensity" incapable of being reduced to extension. And this degree is compatible with the discontinuous nature of the quanta. The thesis is disputable, but it is developed with a penetrating discussion of the Kantian texts. From the comparison of these there emerges much interesting information on the nature of the sensible consciousness according to Kant, which enriches the excessively schematic notion of sensation as a mere "datum," beyond the possibility of investigation, which is the point where Kant's commentators generally call a halt.

Francesco Albergamo traces the history of the logic of mathematics from the Greeks to our own days,[2] in an effort to corroborate Croce's thesis on the practical rather than theoretical character of these studies. The ancient and medieval part of this history is treated very briefly; but the author expatiates widely on the modern part from Kant to Poincaré and Croce. Whoever accepts the purely conventional character of mathematics and of the conception of nature derived therefrom may find in Albergamo's book a copious review of all the arguments that have been used in support of this thesis in the course of history. However, the reading of it gives the impression that the thesis itself is too hasty and that it skates rapidly over too many problems which have had and still have a profound speculative interest and which reveal the inability of pragmatism to give an adequate representation of the mathematical procedure.

From an analogous point of view, but with more direct scientific experience, a chemist, Michele Giua,[3] has written a history of science. In an introductory section the relationship between the history of science and epistemology is studied; the historical investigation that follows stresses chiefly three names—Galileo, Boyle, and Planck, representing for the author three decisive turnings in the evolution of scientific thought.

The relationship between the individual and the mass—and hence between the two forms of life and civilization based on these two terms—is one of the crucial problems of our age. Bandini, who had attacked it a few years ago in a volume of polemic intent directed against the degeneration of our present-day

[1] L. Scaravelli, *Saggio sulla categoria kantiana della realtà*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1947, p. 194.
[2] F. Albergamo, *Storia della logica delle scienze esatte*, Bari, Laterza, 1947, p. 359.
[3] M. Giua, *Storia delle scienze ed epistemologia*, Turin, Chi antore, 1945, p. 297.

mechanical civilization, returns to it now with a volume of more constructive intention.[1] He favours the individualistic and liberal conception, but not dissociated from social exigencies, which ought to occupy a subordinate position if man is not to be degraded to an animal existence.

In this book, too, some polemical points are developed very effectively. For example, Bandini gives the name of "privatism" to a tendency of the modern man which, while it is antithetic to prevailing socialism, is at the same time a consequence of it. "Privatism," he says, "is a necessary product of the forms of life that are peculiar to that type of economistic civilization which is one of our terms. It is closely linked with what could be referred to as the "giantism" of our civilization. In the over-large modern city, in the too distant and too complex civic administration, in the centralizing and universally providing state, the individual finds himself excluded from those forms of public activity to which he is nevertheless called by spontaneous tendencies and innate interests of the human mind." And he therefore confines himself to his own concerns, in the narrow circle of his private interests, and becomes indifferent to public affairs.

To complete the work on Romanticism published in 1943 my volume on Hegel now sees the light. It contains a detailed critical exposition of the whole Hegelian system, and an historical review of the literature concerning Hegel.[2]

[1] L. Bandini, *Uomo e Valore*, Turin, Einaudi, 1942; *Dalla Massa all' individuo*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1947.

[2] G. de Ruggiero, *Hegel*, Bari, Laterza, 1948, p. 309.

GUIDO DE RUGGIERO.

(Translated from the Italian by Beatrice Allen.)

NEW BOOKS

The Philosophy of David Hume. By Norman Kemp Smith. (London: Macmillan & Co. 1941. Pp. xxiv, 568. Price 25s.)

The lateness of this notice of so important a work is unfortunate. The task of reviewing it was committed at the time of publication to someone who has been prevented by very onerous duties from carrying it out. Having taken over the task at short notice, I have not had the opportunity of doing justice to the book in its rich detail. I shall therefore at the outset do it justice in general terms by declaring it to be, so far as I am competent to judge, the most careful and illuminating exposition of Hume's philosophy that has so far appeared, in any language. Perhaps a Scot was required to understand a Scot, though the Scotsmen before Professor Kemp Smith have all failed. If the contentions of the book are accepted—and in my view they should be, on the whole—our text-books will have to be revised; in any case, every future expositor will be very negligent if he does not reckon with this radical re-orientation and re-examination of Hume's philosophical writings. Hume's *Treatise* is a really difficult work, abounding in both subtleties and inconsistencies, and tantalizing because the general merit of it requires us to make something of these. What we have been wanting is a point of view from which Hume's precocious masterpiece becomes, whether acceptable or no, humanly intelligible; and such a point of view has now been given to us. The masterpiece has not hitherto been dealt with well. It has been praised too much with a praise that is facile because resting on little but agreement with its method and apparent conclusions; and it has been belaboured too much with a criticism that is tiresome because inspired by antipathy. Professor Kemp Smith has contented himself with the basic task of trying to see what Hume really meant. When he allows himself a judgment, it is a piece of immanent criticism only.

The outstanding, because unusual, virtue of his patient study is that it seeks to interpret Hume's mind by taking the *Treatise* as a whole, and by considering the two *Enquiries* along with it. Even the tedious Book II of the earliest work, and the weak *Dissertation on the Passions*, are kept in view. By nothing less than all these must the interpretation be tested. Hitherto Hume has been read most often in Book I only of the *Treatise*, and in consequence he has been represented as starting from Locke's *Essay*, and as doing little more than trying, with some help from Berkeley, to make Locke's conclusions more consistent with his presuppositions and methods. The resultant convention has been to depict him as first and foremost an epistemologist, who revelled, and loved to revel, in the negations of an almost complete scepticism. That is certainly a very one-sided and distorting picture. The distinctive general contention of this new study of Hume is that that approach is false in history and falsifying in exposition. Hume, we are now told, began his intellectual struggles—for such they were, not pastimes—on the problems of ethics, so that Books II and III are to be regarded as earlier in conception, and to some extent in execution, than Book I. Further, he pursued his ethical thinking originally and chiefly under the influence of Hutcheson. In the process he became interested in the epistemological problems handled in Locke's seminal *Essay*, and detected the possibility of applying in this field the same Hutchesonian principle that had inspired his ethics. This principle is that "reason" is the servant of feeling. As widened by Hume, it means that not

only our beliefs in values but also our most general beliefs in matters of fact are not determined cognitively. The general gist of Book I of the *Treatise*, then, is not that belief in external material things, and belief in their being causally connected, are unevidenced and are therefore to be philosophically rejected, but that, insusceptible though they are of either logical or empirical proof, they are inexpugnable functions of our nature and indispensable for all our living. Hume's indictment is not of those beliefs, but of the sort of philosophical thinking that claims to rationalize them. That is the general point of view offered to us by Professor Kemp Smith.

That Hume regarded himself primarily as a moral philosopher, indeed as a practical moralist as well, is an impression that grows if we forget the traditional character, move through the full circuit of his writings, and live with him in his letters. It is well-known that he counted his *Principles of Morals* as his best work—"incomparably the best" is his own expression—but the significance of this judgment has rarely been explored. Whether his view of religion be right or wrong, his frequent attacks upon it, in reasoned argument or in disparaging asides, are clearly motivated by the desire to defend the autonomy of morality: he will not have simple human decencies suspended in the name of anything alleged to be better than our natural sympathies as educated by experience and reflection. There is at least as much of the moralist as of the theorist in his political inquiries, and as much of the moralist as of the artist in his *Essays* and his *History*. In his own restrained, unapostolic way—fashionably shunning "enthusiasm"—he had a genuine concern about the social tendencies of his time, and wrote not simply to clarify ideas for clarification's sake, with the integrity of the thinker, but in addition to vindicate and commend, with the integrity of the moralist, a broad humanitarian outlook and practice. At any rate, that is the cumulative impression which I get from reading Hume as a whole. Professor Kemp Smith has much the same impression. But it has led him, as it had not led me (lacking his acumen), into a re-examination of Hume's epistemology. What launched him on this extraordinarily instructive line of research was his recognition of the primacy of the influence of Hutcheson. The fruitfulness of this *ben trovato* is displayed convincingly.

The evidence of the strength and extent of Hutcheson's influence is, of course, circumstantial, and therefore cannot be effectively summarized here; it must be collected piece by piece from a hundred scattered places in the book, and then be brought together. The interest of it goes beyond the bare establishment of an historical link to the giving of a clue to the exposition of Hume in general and in detail. Professor Kemp Smith rightly allows that his broad thesis stand or falls according as it does or does not remove, or otherwise illuminate, some of the problems of exegesis which have often been slurred over, or even adduced as proofs that Hume was too superficial to be taken seriously. No man handling a large realm of discourse at the philosophical level can achieve perfect consistency, but there are apparent inconsistencies in Hume that call for an explanation less obvious than that of human infallibility, and more adequate than that of incompetence, since Hume proves his competence, within the limits of his times, on page after page of all his writings. Why, for example, does he think biologically, in terms of an original complexity of instinct in us, in Book III of the *Treatise* (his ethics), and yet in Book I think like a mechanist, in terms of the external association of simple perceptions? Why does he pulverize the idea of an abiding self in Book I, and frankly assume and appeal to it in Book II? What is his purpose in exposing the flaws in the current arguments for a really external world, and for real causal connections within it, while yet claiming the right to

affirm that world and its network of causes and effects as realities? What are we to make of his apparent explaining away of the idea of necessary connection among matters of fact in terms of a process of association that is explicitly said to involve causal determination? Professor Kemp Smith candidly supposes that these, and other difficulties to which he draws attention, demand explanation, and explanation that is fair both to Hume's intentions and to his philosophical acuteness; and he finds the explanation by detecting the influence of Hutcheson alongside, and in certain respects persisting beyond, that of Locke and Newton. From Locke, Hume took over the principle that all ideas can be traced back to simple impressions; from Newton he caught up the notion of gravitation or attraction, and generalized it, under the form of association, into a principle of comprehensive philosophical applicability; but before he took these two principles in his hand he had already thought out his ethics under the inspiration of Hutcheson, following the latter's view that moral (and aesthetic) beliefs are not affairs of rational insight, but spring from our inherited emotional constitution—and are none the worse for that. Given these three lines of influence instead of one or two, we are better equipped to understand the divagations, and the disparities of assumption and method, that face us in Hume's works; and given the primacy of Hutcheson's influence, we have a special clue to the reasons for some of Hume's second thoughts in the appendix to the *Treatise* and in the two *Enquiries*—it helps us, for instance, to see why his ethics emerged in the revision virtually unchanged.

I have dwelt on these most general contentions of the book because they have at least a liberating value. They free us from reading Hume through the old spectacles, and it is time anyhow that these were changed. On the detail of the book I cannot, because of haste, be expansive, though it is so full that even without haste the consideration of it would not be adequate within the limits of a review. Virtually every topic of Hume's epistemology and ethics is closely and luminously scrutinized. His dissection of the passions, his analysis and classification and grounding of the virtues, his unsatisfying views of space and time, the relation of the *Treatise* to the *Enquiries*, are all examined with unusually helpful results. There is an excellent vindication of the charge against Hume that he was a panderer in his revisions, accommodating his views to the prejudices of the reading public, as though his confession of "love of literary fame, my ruling passion," had to be understood with the help of nothing but a dictionary; and there is a perfect answer to the occasionally expressed opinion that on reaching his full powers Hume "deserted philosophy" for politics and history. Long notes printed as appendices to their relevant chapters are full of instruction on particular points; the shorter footnotes, when they are more than references, are littered with valuable information and comments.

For the rest, it will probably be useful to give Professor Kemp Smith's interpretation of the supposedly familiar Book I of the *Treatise*. Every reader will, I imagine, rise from his chapters with the suspicion that that Book has not been familiar to us at all. A new light is made to play upon it. Its inconsistencies are uncovered amply enough, in particular those faults of exposition with which Hume gives us every excuse for misunderstanding him; but these are explained in terms of the main tendencies of his thought, the incompatible influences to which he was responding. The following bare summary of the resultant cleansed account of his epistemological doctrine is all that I can give. It will convey no idea of the wealth of detailed analysis and sympathetic insight with which that account is constructed and evidenced.

Book I of the *Treatise* deals with belief, this term being used by Hume in the special sense of assurance of matters of fact as distinguished from know-

ledge in the Lockian sense of apprehension of the necessary connections of ideas. There are two general beliefs, one in a continuing independent material realm, the other in causal connections within this realm. Hume's investigation is not really with the question whether these are valid or no. We are natively realistic, and cannot by any amount of philosophizing reason ourselves out of that attitude. Philosophy can correct that native realism at one point only, namely, by proving that the immediate objects of awareness are not extra-mental but subjective entities, "ideas" in Locke's sense. The proof, however, itself proceeds on our native realistic assumption, which alone set the current philosophical problem and alone gave meaning to it, the problem of how from momentary subjective objects we can validly infer an abiding external order. Hume's answer is, on his "sceptical" side, that we cannot; on his positive side, that we have no need to do so, since the two beliefs will hold their ground against all logic, being inevitable in operation and necessary for both thought and practice. The first thing philosophy can do is to make this position clear. Hume is here applying in a new sphere the Hutchesonian principle which he has applied in his ethics, namely, that our basic beliefs (which on a few occasions he unfortunately calls "reason") are determined for us—determined, he says, by "feeling," meaning antecedently to and independently of all rational insight. This is Hume's naturalism. Whether the beliefs are "valid" or no may be a question of terminology. We cannot get rid of them either in philosophy or in practice; and having a belief *means* holding its content as true.

The second thing philosophy can do is to analyse out the natural factors in those beliefs. Hume's work on belief in causality being the more distinctive, we may confine ourselves to that, though it should be remembered that the other belief is presupposed, causality being understood by him to be a relation between realities, not between ideas (except when these are being regarded as mental realities). His problem here, set by his acceptance of Locke's principle that all ideas are reducible to impressions, is to find the origin of the idea of causality, to trace out its natural history. It is not the idea of uniform but of necessary connection. No amount of sensory observation can discover any such connection, there being no more to be seen, on the side of the object, in many instances of a causal connection than in one. But in many instances the uniformity of the connection sets up an association in the mind, such that given one of its terms in impression the other term, in idea, springs up. In the resultant sense of inner compulsion, of determined transition, in this process, Hume finds the source of the idea of causality—in an impression of reflection, after having failed to find it in an impression of sensation. It may be objected that this makes causal inference not inference at all, not a passage of cognitive insight but simply a caused mental process; but that is precisely the conclusion which Hume was claiming to establish. It may be objected also that he is assuming a causal determination in the process on which he is resting the very idea of causality; but that is in order because the validity of the idea is not in question but only its origin, and also because the "natural belief" in causality operates as inevitably in our thinking about mental as of any other sort of process. His doctrine is, then, that uniformity generates a habit, and that habit generates a sense of forced transition of thought, the former being a pre-condition of the idea of causality, and the latter being its impressional source and therefore its meaning, *constituting* it. The argument is not, as is commonly supposed, one in which Hume is denying causal agency, for that, he holds, it is impossible to do (except in mere words). What he is denying is causal *inference*. In what is so called, the mind is not intuiting anything, but is simply working according to its own original causal nature. The idea of

causality has not a logical ground; it has a cause; and Hume has given what he regards as the manifest cause, refraining on principle from seeking or inventing an occult one.

The analysis is not yet complete. Habit or association would account for nothing more than expectation: having experienced A and B frequently together, the re-occurrence of A would lead us to expect B. But the fact to be causally accounted for is *belief* in B. To explain this, Hume brings in his view of belief as a peculiar kind of liveliness that can be attached to ideal contents but belongs originally to impressions. Following the secondary mechanistic (Newtonian) line of his thinking, he declares that the liveliness original to impressions is naturally communicated, like motion from one body to another on impact, to any idea firmly associated with it. His deeper view, however, Hutchesonian in spirit, is that belief is an *attitude*, and an outward-facing one, spontaneously projective or realistic, and under this view he came later to transfer his emphasis from the mechanistic notion of communication of liveliness to the ultimate naturalness of *belief* in causality as a complex attitude which we are born to have and use. He holds to a similar original complexity in the realistic belief that accompanies all sensation, for sensation taken strictly is only, for him as for Locke, an immediate *awareness* of subjective impressions.

In this sustained insistence—in his mechanistic as in his biological moods—that all our assurance about matters of fact is not evidenced apprehension but natively prompted belief, Hume was drawing tightly the limits of reason. Yet he regarded himself as a sceptic in only a very modified sense. For him dogmatists and sceptics alike assume that belief without reasons is to be rejected. He distinguishes himself from both by denying that assumption. Reason has its critical function in the logical purging of particular beliefs, but it is within the sphere of natural belief that it rightly operates. It cannot either reject the natural beliefs in their generality, or go altogether beyond them without losing the contact with reality which they alone can and do give. By believing in reason as sovereign in demonstrative thinking about the relations of ideas, and as a necessary auxiliary in thinking about matters of fact, Hume was not a sceptic—despite his unguarded statement (one of many) that custom is king.

Such, as clear as I can make it, is Professor Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume's epistemology. If it is not clear, and suggests no novelty, the fault is mine. I only wish that I could have given a more adequate indication of the probing skill and the human and philosophical insight expressed in this remarkable fundamental study of Hume.

T. E. Jessop

Critical Thinking. An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method. By Max Black, Professor of Philosophy, Cornell University. (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. Pp. xv + 402. Price, $5.)

"Logic," says Professor Max Black in his Preface, "ought to be easy, interesting, and enjoyable." He has given us in this book an introduction to Logic which is all these things, without any sacrifice of rigour or seriousness. It is a real beginner's book, and no trouble is spared to familiarize the reader with the elementary concepts and processes of logic. It is also a book which the teacher of logic can enjoy on account of the skill displayed in the presentation of the material and in the devices used to elucidate or illustrate particular points. Each chapter is followed by a summary, a comprehension test of the modern intelligence test type, and exercises, many of them quite intriguing. It

seems to me altogether admirable; and one can only regret that the dollar situation must for the time being restrict its use in this country.

There are three parts, dealing with Deductive Logic, Language, and Induction and Scientific Method. In Part I Professor Black, rightly in my view, puts in the forefront conditional arguments, and arguments involving alternatives, exercising the student in them very thoroughly, before going on to a consideration of subject-predicate propositions and to categorical syllogisms. The whole of this is in a thoroughly modern spirit, but without any great departure from tradition. There is one surprising omission. Singular propositions do not come under the head of subject-predicate propositions as defined by Professor Black, and in consequence they are not treated anywhere in the book, either in the chapter on propositions or in that on syllogisms.

In the treatment of the syllogism, which is commendably brief, while the general rules of the syllogism are given, and used to show how to determine the validity of particular syllogisms, the whole discussion is closely linked with the use of Venn's diagrams, and there is no time wasted on a discussion of figures and moods, or of reduction of the other figures to the first figure. A general treatment of the theory of the syllogism, to determine all the possible valid moods in the various figures, is relegated to the appendix. The method of exposition in this appendix is not new, but is very neatly expressed, and occupies very little space. I do not know of any treatment elsewhere in print which is quite so neat. But the whole business belongs to the past rather than to the present.

In the system of classification adopted by many libraries Logic has the classmark BC. This is appropriate, in a subject where tradition counts for so much, and modern improvements are so discounted. If students of Arithmetic were still taught to add, multiply, and divide, using Roman numerals, carefully avoiding the technical improvements made possible by Arabic numerals, we should have in Arithmetic something similar to what we have in the traditional logic as still taught, and mathematics would suffer as much as logic has done, through want of a sufficiently large body of students trained in advanced processes.

If I were producing an elementary book on logic I should cut out the theory of the syllogism entirely, and deal with subject-predicate propositions on modern lines. This reform seems to me vastly overdue. Professor Black has not done this, but he has at least cut out a great deal of the purely B.C. stuff. And there is nothing in this part of his book, dealing with Deductive Logic, which would unfit a student to go ahead with the modern developments, as his next stage in the subject. That is something.

It should be noted that in this part Professor Black has concentrated on getting students technically efficient in handling deductive processes. He has not raised any of the wider issues, which might be called philosophical, such as the question of the nature of propositions, the relation of propositions to sentences, whether deduction can give new truth, and so on.

Part II, dealing with Language, has a similar practical purpose, to make students consciously aware of the variety of ways in which language is used and the nefarious purposes to which it can be put. As Professor Black says, he is not attempting "any systematic account of the nature of language and its relation to the objects of thought," but merely undertaking "the relatively modest task of developing just so much theory of language . . . as will be useful in criticizing the types of reasoning we are likely to encounter. This part of the book may therefore be regarded as a practical handbook *to the linguistic problems which arise in the criticism of reasoning*." The italics are

Professor Black's; and I have quoted this passage because it expresses so well the general practical attitude which characterizes the book as a whole.

After a general chapter on the Uses of Language, this section has chapters on Ambiguity, on Definition, and on Assorted Fallacies. As throughout the book, there are admirable illustrations in the text taken from current books and periodicals, and a large variety of exercises.

Part III, entitled "Induction and Scientific Method," is interesting because of the way in which the subject is dealt with on various levels of accuracy and generality, starting with commonsense generalizations, and proceeding gradually to the more complicated procedures followed by the sciences. The chapter on Scientific Method contains half a dozen fairly long specimens of modern scientific investigation, with a discussion of the principles involved in them, the whole being rounded off by two chapters, one on Scientific Data and one on Scientific Theory. The treatment is fresh and stimulating, with none of the usual text-book taint, and always directed to getting students to understand what scientists are doing, and why they must do it if their generalizations are to be sound.

There are a number of small misprints—difficult to avoid in a book of this kind—but they can easily be corrected by an attentive reader. The book is rounded off by a glossary of technical terms explained with Professor Black's usual clarity and conciseness, a list of suggestions for further reading, and a satisfactory index. Paper, printing, general layout, and binding are excellent, and the book is pleasant to handle.

If students don't like Logic, it won't be Professor Black's fault.

L. J. Russell.

Philosophy and Politics. By Bertrand Russell. Fourth National Book League Lecture. Delivered at Friends House, London, October 23, 1946. (Cambridge University Press, 1947. Pp. 29. Price 2s. 6d.)

Lord Russell distinguishes between philosophy, pursued as a study among other studies in the universities of the Western democratic world, and the "historically usual sense" of the word, the sense to which philosophy has "owed its social and political importance," in which it has "resulted from the attempt to produce a synthesis of religion and science, or, perhaps more exactly, to combine a doctrine as to the nature of the universe and man's place in it with a practical ethic inculcating what was considered the best way of life." The former view of it is a "very modern" view, and "even in the modern world exceptional." It is to the latter that Lord Russell directs his attention in this essay. In this sense "most philosophy has been a reaction against scepticism; it has arisen in ages when authority no longer sufficed to produce the necessary minimum of belief, so that nominally rational arguments had to be invented to secure the same result. This motive has led to a deep insincerity infecting most philosophy, ancient and modern" (8–10).

Plato and Hegel are the leading examples of this. "That Plato's Republic" —"this totalitarian tract"—"should have been admired on its political side by decent people" Lord Russell calls "the most astonishing example of literary snobbery in all history" (13). Plato's ideal of a static perfection, embodied in his theory of ideas, is "one which is now generally recognized to be inapplicable to human affairs." "Man needs for his happiness not only the enjoyment of this and that, but hope, and enterprise, and change." Among philosophers "the ideal of unending and unchanging bliss has been replaced by that of evolution," as part of "the substitution of dynamics for statics which began with Galileo, and which has increasingly affected all modern

thinking, whether scientific or political" (14). Science, it is true, offers only change, "a purposeless see-saw"; and philosophers have not been content with this, and "have professed to discover a formula of progress, showing that the world was becoming more and more to their liking" (15). The formula discovered, the public is adjured to join the winning side, and those who do not do so are condemned as "unphilosophic, unscientific, and out of date." "At the same time the winning side, for reasons which remain somewhat obscure, is represented as the side of virtue" (16). Hegel is the first fully to develop this point of view. His philosophy "is so odd that one would not have expected him to be able to get sane man to believe it, but he did. He set it out with so much obscurity that people thought it must be profound" (16). Four pages devoted to its analysis do not make it much less obscure, but that is perhaps not their intention.

Lord Russell proclaims his own sympathy with empiricism, which he equates to the scientific outlook, and which is "the only philosophy that affords a justification for democracy in its temper of mind" (20). Its affinity is with liberal, rather than with extreme democracy, and the bond is in the realization of the provisional character of hypotheses. The empirical mind will not wish to carry political action beyond demonstrable necessity, and will fight shy of inflicting present and certain pain for distant and speculative ends, whether these be put forward in the name of religious, of social, or of racial dogmatism. Order without authority may be taken as the motto both of science and of liberalism (23). It is commonly urged that in a war between liberals and fanatics, the fanatics are sure to win, but "all history, including that of the last few years," is against this belief (25). Dogmatic societies are weakened by the antagonisms they incur, and by the sacrifice of responsiveness to fact and reality that the dogmatic temper entails. "For these various reasons it is not to be expected that, in the long run, nations addicted to a dogmatic philosophy will have the advantage over those of a more empirical temper" (26). But in an atomic age the run may not be very long, and since "only through a revival of liberal tentativeness and tolerance can our world survive" (24), it is necessary that "in the nations which still uphold liberal beliefs, those beliefs should be whole-hearted and profound, not apologetic towards dogmatisms of the right or the left, but deeply persuaded of the value of liberty, scientific freedom, and mutual forbearance" (27).

It would thus seem that Lord Russell's final appeal is to faith in the nineteenth-century formula of science, liberty, and progress (cf. 11). Such a formula represents the things he finds to his liking in the world; he is satisfied of its social strength; and he asserts its moral superiority (26). It does not, however, seem to be on any very different plane of cogency from the philosophies that he rejects. It may also be felt that his implied picture of science cooing with considerate respect for other modes of feeling and thought, if it is meant to represent history and not ideal, is somewhat overdone. Science, and scientific liberalism too, have had their days of dogmatism. The scientific economics of Ricardo bears an equal responsibility with Hegelianism for Marxian dogmatism. It may be argued that the mark of our time is the supercession of religious revelation as the spiritual discipline of society by political apocalypticisms claiming scientific warranty for their truth, and that in the latters' lack of human balance lies the root of our political excesses. Anticlericalism was a vital element in the nineteenth-century liberal movement in Europe which failed, and so far as liberalism is reviving there, it seems to be growing off the religious root. In England, on the other hand, religious impulses made a vital contribution to liberalism—as to all shades of politics, without defining any—with the result not only of a more tolerant climate of

opinion, but of a more catholic outlook on human nature—exemplified in the relative absence of "block thinking" which Lord Russell notes (7)—which is not without its part in that power of English society to take a strain to which Lord Russell refers (26). It may be that Baal, in the shape of a proper scientific scepticism, can cast out Baal in the shape of pseudo-scientific social apocalypses. Many who welcome Lord Russell's conclusions will feel, however, that a more catholic faith is necessary; conceivably one less insulated from the historic religious discipline of Western society than his, and readier to acknowledge indebtedness to the philosophic tradition that he attacks.

W. D. HANDCOCK.

Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. By HARRY AUSTRYN WOLFSON. Two volumes. (Harvard University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1947. Pp. xvi + 462, xiv + 532. $10. 55s. net.)

In 1929 Dr. Wolfson published through the Harvard University Press under the title *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* a work which, though still almost unknown in England, opened for medievalists a wide field for inquiry and consideration. It was followed naturally enough in 1934 by two volumes on *The Philosophy of Spinoza* for reasons which students of Crescas at any rate are not likely to under-value. But from the conjunction has taken rise the project of an undertaking so stupendous as to leave the admiring spectator at least in doubt if without a large amount of co-operation it can ever be accomplished. In a sense the new instalment of nearly one thousand pages mainly, though by no means exclusively, devoted to Philo of Alexandria might claim the right to stand by itself as an independent work: it certainly exceeds in bulk all contributions made to such studies over a long terms of years. But anyone who during those years has been reading and analysing Philo for himself without Dr. Wolfson's dominating conception in mind may, perhaps must, ask himself if the result can be fairly judged until at any rate one or even two more of the proposed sections of the building have been fitted into place, lest the criticisms which suggest themselves in respect of method and treatment should prove to have been otiose if not wholly illegitimate or irrelevant. For it must be borne in mind that very large claims are being made. After an almost breathless page of rhetorical questions we are told: "If the answer given by us is correct, then Philo will emerge from our study as a philosopher in the grand manner, not a mere dabbler in philosophy. He did have the power of intellect to be able to reject the theories of other philosophers and to strike out a new and hitherto unknown path for himself. He is to be given credit for originality in all the problems dealt with by him, for in this particular set of problems he was the originator of every fundamental concept which continued to be discussed thereafter throughout the history of philosophy. . . . It is most remarkable that without a group of official disciples his teachings became the most dominant influence in European philosophy for well-nigh seventeen centuries." We have already learnt: "That he was a good preacher—in fact, the founder of the art of preaching as we know it—and perhaps the greatest philosophic preacher that has ever lived, can be readily admitted," and may be allowed to take the decision *ad avisandum*. In regard to Philo's philosophical achievement Dr. Wolfson at once excites and disarms by setting out a list of authorities who take a view or series of views in which it appears under far less favourable guise; and it is in fact in the working out of his own thesis in thirteen chapters, leading up to the triumphant conclusion "What Is New in Philo?" that the real zest and stimulus of his long investiga-

tion is to be found. Incidentally it may be noted that the last section of most chapters gives under the caption "Conclusion, Influence, Anticipation" at least a foretaste of the use that is to be made of the results in the companion volumes as yet unborn. At present a comprehensive survey of them all hardly produces so optimistic an impression as might be desired, but that, as has been indicated, may be doing the writer injustice at this stage, even if we have to confess that the Palatium Veritatis if ever constructed on these lines seems likely to have a curious resemblance to a famous Jesuit's reconstitution of Noah's Ark seen through seventeenth-century eyes.

Dr. Wolfson's plan serves to maintain the reader's interest as the scheme of treatment is unrolled before him. In three preliminary chapters making nearly half of the first volume we are given under the headings "Hellenistic Judaism and Philo," "Handmaid of Scripture" and "Scriptural Presuppositions" a summary of the main problems and conditions of treatment as affected by what may be conceived to be Philo's reactions to the intellectual and physical environment and his own upbringing and natural predilections. In regard to some of these matters a writer must almost inevitably be indicating his own acceptance or rejection of the conclusions of others: in some he may be marking out a line of his own which may not be the less important because it is stated in such apparently unexciting dicta as the statement that Philo "uses terms borrowed from the mysteries in the same way as he uses terms borrowed from popular religion and from mythology, all of them because they were part of common speech." Again the depth and range of Philo's knowledge in various directions including his knowledge of Hebrew, the meaning, use and limitations of allegory, and the grounds for regarding him as "a critic of Stoicism and a reviser of Platonism" are all natural subjects for discussion upon which a good deal is found worth saying and is well said even if later on the reader may come to wonder if the correlation of "Chaldæans" and "Stoics" cannot be seriously overdone. These chapters lead on to discussions in the first volume of such topics as "God, the World of Ideas, and the Logos," "Creation and the Structure of the World," "The Immanent Logos, Laws of Nature, Miracles," "Souls, Angels, Immortality" and "Free Will"; and it is upon these that the reader's judgment upon Philo, upon Dr. Wolfson's view of Philo and upon Dr. Wolfson himself as interpreter will most intimately depend. No one expects a work crammed full with references to be easy to handle, especially when, as too often, little if anything beyond a bare reference is given, though much may depend on the turn of a phrase and the correction or confirmation of an impression as to the justice or injustice of the description of Philo's treatment whether of the Logos and powers and ideas or of angels as "systematically coherent" may entail hours of work. Most of us would admit that it is time well and interestingly spent, while feeling that here and there the writer might have lightened the labour especially where, as in regard to the Logos, the acceptance or rejection of his conclusions cannot but vitally affect the estimate of his whole thesis. There is at times a fatal fluency which induces a doubt if the position can really be so simple, and while it may seem to some that the author has been successful almost beyond belief in producing order out of chaos, an uneasy feeling persists that the Harvard Philo is much too tidy a person to have been at home in Alexandria, Egypt, and that the looseness of speaking which is allowed on occasion in extenuation of apparent inconsistencies is an indication of greater looseness of thinking than Dr. Wolfson's remarkable ingenuity as an apologist is often prepared to concede. And failure to admit that consistency which he seems at times so anxious to clamp down upon Philo will of course have a bearing on the interesting contrasts with Spinoza and his "overthrow of all

those principles which as formulated by Philo became the common preamble of faith in all the religious philosophies in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam." The "hypothetico-deductive method of text study," to borrow a phrase of the author's own invention, has its dangers as well as its advantages, and frankly after collating in the mind scores of passages which Dr. Wolfson has also used, and remembering the enormous advantage which his own training and chosen studies give him in forming a judgment on such questions, we find it almost incredible that any author making, as Dr. Wolfson contends Philo did, philosophy the handmaid of Scripture, ever set out to perform on the ancient philosophers the series of surgical operations and readjustments with which he is here credited. Eclecticism is admitted—it could not indeed be denied—but one can hardly help thinking that greater allowance might fairly be made for development and the same contrasts be recognized in Philo's works as are noted now and again at least in those of Plato.

The six chapters which make up the second volume deal *inter alia* with Knowledge and Prophecy, Proofs of the Existence of God, the Unknowability of God and Divine Predicates, Ethical and Political Theory with sections on the Ideal Constitution and the Messianic Age—the latter compared and contrasted into the Stoic conception of the universal state. Like the curious and highly ingenuous disquisitions on miracles in the previous volume, the treatment of several of these topics has an interest for present-day discussions which can hardly fail to be noticed. In the sphere of ethical theory the student may at times be tempted to think that he is confronting a different Philo because less ingenuity has to be exercised in interpretation when we are dealing, for example, with repentance than has been found necessary in regard to metaphysical questions or the perhaps unduly tortuous discussion of prophecy in its various aspects. The examination in Chapter XI of the "Unknowability of God and Divine Predicates" develop arguments which Dr. Wolfson has advanced earlier, and in its wider aspect raises questions interesting for the archaeologist and the historian as well as for the theologian and metaphysician, in which connection the writer's main concern is to show that Philo expresses himself "in terms not used by others before him about God," just as earlier he is at equal pains to insist that "the expression intelligible world . . . which Philo gives to his totality of ideas is not known to have been used before him," and "was probably coined by Philo himself." It is perhaps less unfortunate than characteristic of Philo that it had to be pointed out in the earlier chapter on "God, Ideas, Logos" that the new expression so far as the word "intelligible" was concerned had to be interpreted in two different senses.

In regard to political theory, attention is called, though not for the first time, to the instructive analogies which can be traced between the treatment of such problems by Polybius and Philo. This gives occasion incidentally for a consideration of the place to be assigned to Fortune, as to which Dr. Wolfson rather surprisingly maintains that the "fortune" of Polybius is "nothing but what the Stoics would call God or nature or universal law or fate or providence or the Logos of the world, all meaning nothing but the fixed immutable order of nature or the concatenation of cause and effect," while he indulges in quite a lengthy exposition of what he supposes Philo to have meant by saying that changes in states and governments are due to "that divine Logos which most people call fortune." In his concluding chapter the writer constructs a "synthetic medieval philosopher, made up of all the common elements of the Christian, the Moslem, and the Jewish philosophers," and invites us to follow in the track of his reasoning as he proceeds to revise Greek philosophy. It is not possible to accompany him further in the limits of a review; but it would

be ungenerous to close without acknowledgment of the service rendered by the series of indexes which add so greatly to the value of a notable book. Is it, however, ungenerous to inquire whether or not the English price of fifty-five shillings for the two volumes fairly represents the ten dollars which they cost in the United States, and on which side the addition is made?

CLAUDE JENKINS.

A Study of Goethe. By BARKER FAIRLEY. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1947. Pp. 250. Price 15s.)

This book is primarily a psychological study of Goethe as an "Erlebnisdichter": nevertheless it deserves the serious attention of anyone who is interested in the philosophical problems that arise from artistic creation and from the attempt to define the boundary between metaphysical speculation and scientific inquiry. Professor Fairley provides exact translations of all the prose passages, and adequate summaries of all the verse passages, he quotes from Goethe; consequently the reader who knows no German can gain a good deal from the book as a whole, and in particular from the chapters dealing with Goethe's "Nature Philosophy."

Goethe lived through and was profoundly influenced by one of the most important philosophical movements since the Renaissance: he repeatedly confessed his debt to Kant, especially to the *Critique of Judgment*, and his influence on Hegel is obvious, not only in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hence it is quite natural that much of his poetry and imaginative prose should have been read, in Germany and elsewhere, as a kind of illustrative supplement to post-Kantian idealism. *Faust*, *Wilhelm Meister* and the poems entitled *Gott und Welt*, for instance, must have inspired thousands of intellectually bewildered readers during the past century with a vague reverence for "the whole"—a reverence that comforted the heart if it failed to direct the conscience; again Goethe's writings must have led thousands of readers to believe in paradox as the wicket-gate to all "higher truth" and in certain vague "laws of development" manifested equally in Nature and in the artistic, social and political activities of men. On the other hand, Goethe's most characteristic ideas are well worth considering on their own merits and in relation to his own personal development; and this is why Professor Fairley's book is of importance to philosophers. It provides an admirable account of how Goethe's "Nature Philosophy" grew from three streams in his many-sided thought—his intense preoccupation with his own wayward poetic gifts, his capacity for devising imaginary models to explain certain aspects of the variety of nature, and his struggle to achieve a balanced personal morality and Weltanschauung.

Professor Fairley's book, however, is by no means confined to this side of Goethe's achievement; and, if only to indicate how Fairley puts Goethe's philosophy into the general setting of his life, the following brief survey of the book's contents may be useful. The first part, "Before Weimar," seems to me a masterpiece of appreciative criticism; it consists in the main in tracing out the implications of Goethe's famous "chameleon image," and it culminates in the paradoxical conclusion that Goethe, the most intellectually gifted of the world's great poets, suffered, at least till his thirtieth year, from a really dangerous "arrested intellectual development." The second part of the book, "Before Italy," also contains some remarkably illuminating criticism; particularly in connection with the "Charlotte poetry" of Goethe's early Weimar years. Professor Fairley's most original conclusion here is that during the period Goethe came to live vicariously, and to express vicariously in some of

his very finest poetry, e.g. *Iphigenie*, the somewhat second-rate, certainly second-hand, "spirituality" of Charlotte von Stein's personal philosophy. The third part, "Italy and After," contains, as well as the prolonged discussion of the inter-relations of Goethe's poetic, scientific and philosophic interests, important chapters on Schiller, on Goethe's short-lived cult of Greek metrical forms, and on Goethe's "political dilemma." The last of these seems to me remarkably well-balanced. Goethe *was* aware of a kind of impotence in himself with regard to the major political movements of his day; and he was tragically envious of those young Englishmen whom he admired so much in his old age—young men who found themselves born into a liberal, and politically intensely active, society.

We can now turn to the central theme of Professor Fairley's book: Goethe's "arrival" as a poetic, scientific and philosophical sage. There are here four main questions: (1) Was Goethe a genuine scientist, or simply a gifted amateur, dabbling in geology, botany, comparative anatomy and the theory of colour vision? Fairley comes down strongly—and I think absolutely rightly—for the view that Goethe had a genuine passion and capacity for natural science, which, far from being an off-shoot or aberration of his artistic genius (as Helmholtz and others have suggested), remained wholly unrelated to his artistic interests until he had reached middle-age. Fairley brings out the important fact that Goethe's scientific interests were "unprofessional" only in the sense of being remarkably fresh, unbookish and developed, for the most part, in the teeth of a stagnant "professional" tradition. I wish, however, that Fairley had discussed the reasons that have led many historians of science since Helmholtz to belittle Goethe's scientific achievements. (2) In what ways did Goethe's scientific interests come eventually to affect his poetry? Goethe himself was never tired of insisting that his scientific studies had helped him, as a poet, to concentrate "on the object" to express the individual push and go of outward things, instead of treating these simply as targets for, or barriers to, the surges of his own personal feelings. Professor Fairley accepts and elaborates Goethe's judgment on the point. I think, however, that it is worth remarking that this influence of Goethe's scientific interests on his poetry was very indirect; certainly it did not result in his writing poetry which in any marked way expressed his own original scientific ideas. In this connection the main point to stress, I should have thought, was not so much that Goethe brought his scientific interests to bear on his poetry, as that he succeeded in writing magnificent poetry (e.g. *Die Metamorphosis der Pflansen*) on scientific subjects.

(3) Was Goethe in any important sense a philosopher, and, if so, how is his philosophical position best described? On this question, Professor Fairley's discussion disappointed me. He brings together many of Goethe's most interesting sayings; he mentions the features in Goethe's thinking that are most relevant to the issue; but his summing up, to the effect that Goethe's principal beliefs were in science, in objectivity and in unity seems to me banal and unilluminating to a degree. Curiously enough Professor Fairley makes no mention in this part of his discussion of Goethe's attitude to the philosophies of Kant and Hegel. This is a subject that would reward careful study (Ernst Cassirer has made a limited contribution to it) and that would, in my belief, help to explain why Goethe never tried to develop his own philosophical ideas systematically. The question remains—and Professor Fairley's book has the merit of *suggesting* it—what kind of systematic philosophy would have satisfied Goethe; what kind of philosophy could combine, for instance, Goethe's sympathy with the intention and approach (though not the results) of Kant's great critiques, Goethe's monism—based, it is worth emphasizing, largely on

empirical considerations and Goethe's preoccupation with what he called "polar concepts"?

(4) Does Goethe deserve the title of "philosophical poet," and, if so, in which of the various senses in which this phrase has been used? On this point Professor Fairley writes vigorously and, as against those who have claimed that after his Italian journey Goethe "lost his poet's soul," quite conclusively. Fairley discusses, with admirable illustrations, the wholly original, and indeed unique, qualities of the best of Goethe's later poetry: its remarkable combination and interplay of conception and imagery, of lucidity and riddle, of paradox and magisterial certainty of diction. On the other hand there is an important sense of "philosophical poetry" which applies to none or at most to very little, of Goethe's later verse. There is hardly, I think, a single great philosophical utterance in all Goethe's verse that cannot be matched by an almost equivalent, and usually equally suggestive, statement in his prose-writings and conversations. In other words, Goethe's philosophical poems express conclusions which he had reached by processes independent of his poetic inspiration. In this respect Goethe's philosophical poetry lacks something which we find, for instance, in the most illuminating and original poems of Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Rilke and Yeats.

Since it is written as a vindication of Goethe's poetic achievement, Professor Fairley's book has some of the onesidedness of a counsel's defence. Unpleasant traits in Goethe's character are glossed over. Goethe was, among other things, a bit of a prig, a bit of a humbug, a wordly compromiser, and just a little *too* successful. ("The old egoist" as Heine said so incisively.) It is much more important, however, especially to-day, to recall what was original, what was heroic, and what, for all his faults, was throughout his life so remarkably attractive and lovable in Goethe. He never staled. This is why one can return to his writings again and again, not only for wisdom and instruction, but for nourishment and delight. W. B. Gallie.

Giornale di Metafisica. Anno II. Numero 4–5. July–Sept., 1947. Turin.

This recently founded periodical, appearing every two months and edited by Dr. M. F. Sciacca of Pavia University, represents Roman Catholicism, and prints only invited articles. The present number is a symposium on the nature of metaphysics and on its most general problems. The sixteen contributions have come from six countries. Most of them are in Italian or French, two are in Spanish, and one in English. The whole is an interesting venture in collaboration, displaying a rich variety of statement of roughly the same philosophical position. There is the Augustinian note here and there as well as the Thomistic, but the most striking feature is the extent to which not only the vocabulary but also even the mode of argumentation has been influenced by the Italian idealism of Hegelian inspiration. The recurrent ideas or motives are the defence of metaphysical speculation, the necessity of a transcendent reality, and the rightness of the *a posteriori* method. Instead of following the articles *seriatim*, I shall attempt a rough grouping.

The editor leads off (*Metaphysics and its Problems*) with a consideration of the tendency in certain quarters to reject metaphysics outright, and draws the distinction between the anti-metaphysical and the merely non-metaphysical attitudes. After a swift review of the history of modern philosophy he concludes that this has culminated in the kind of metaphysics that exists as a solution of spiritual problems. Since it used to be the common neo-Scholastic criticism of the grand line of philosophy from Descartes onwards that it started from the self instead of from Nature, it is worth noting that whether the start-

ing-point should be the one or the other appears occasionally in these papers to be now a matter of recognized dispute. C. Boyer (*What is Metaphysics?*) says outright that metaphysics rests on the fact of self-knowledge. A mediating position is taken up on this issue by F. Amerio (*What is Metaphysics?*), who avers that metaphysics is a study neither of the physical nor of the spiritual, but of "primordial experience," that is, experience at the level where the specification into physical and spiritual has not yet arisen. He submits that the constitutive notions of that level are contingency, absoluteness and causality. Another mediating position is put forward by A. Carlini (*Towards the Grounding of a Critical Metaphysics*), namely, that metaphysics is the science in which the knowing self is seen to be co-involved with the reality known, this recognition being "critical" in the philosophical sense. This aspect of the problem is carried further by M. De Corte (*Metaphysics and the Metaphysician*), who makes his article turn on Fichte's famous dictum that an individual's philosophy is determined by what the individual himself is. The writer endorses this to the extent of insisting that the philosopher must think with his whole mind. He adduces as a parallel St. Thomas's saying that "strictly speaking, sense and intellect do not know, but the man by means of them."

The relation of the transcendent to the given is examined in its epistemological aspect by G. Berger (*What is Metaphysics?*): we are driven to the transcendent, he says, because we find that which is given in experience to be insufficient, with ragged edges, open or in the air. He notes that since the given is strictly only what is *now*, we transcend it in all our thinking. His principle being that a datum is necessary for anything that is to be called knowledge, he excludes the knowledge of God and of human destiny from metaphysics on the ground that in regard to them the data are given in revelation. A. Guzzo (*What is Metaphysics?*) seems to argue in another way to the same conclusion. His starting-point is not the insufficiency of the given but the sense of creatureliness: it is a mark of the Christian as of the Platonic philosophy not to postulate the "incommensurability" of man and the divine but to insist on this relation as a fact of experience—we are aware of an "inattingibile vicinissimo," an intimate presence that is essentially beyond our reach. On the same general theme A. Forest (*Convergences of Doctrine in Metaphysics*), examining historically the metaphysical tradition, finds its unity or continuity in the persistent discovery of the transcendent *in* the given.

Metaphysics as the quest for unity is the aspect emphasized by J. R. S. Lange (*What is Metaphysics?*), who regrets that the contemporary European thinkers (he writes from Argentina) are slipping away from the European tradition. The same emphasis is made by L. Stefanini (*The Metaphysics of Form*). Beginning with the Gestalt-theory, he maintains that it is the very nature of the mind to unify, the indefeasible unity of the subject being related to its objects in a formative way. For him metaphysics is the study of forms understood as structures, seen as "compenetrating," and seen also as pointing to an all-inclusive divine Form.

The remaining articles lie outside the above grouping. A. G. Alvarez (*The Approach to Metaphysics to determine its Essence*) champions nominalism: since all that exists is individual, all knowledge is intuitive, even the knowledge of God, who "cannot be contained in any generic concept." The knowledge of God is necessarily analogical. That the method of analogy should be re-examined and tried out with empiricist scruples is recommended, after a mention of Whitehead, by I. Collins (*Metaphysics in an Empirical Climate*) in an illuminating and sensitive survey of the philosophical temper in the United States. L. Lavelle (*Epitome of a Spiritual Metaphysics*) propounds an

idealism of the Fichtean kind: nothing but mind exists except by and for mind, matter being necessary to mind as its limit and instrument. The only article that concentrates on the problem of values is R. Le Senne (*Outline of Axiological Metaphysics*): all our usual values, he observes, so far as they are determinate, are negative, so that in practice it is fanatical to devote oneself to any one of them exclusively, and in theory it is necessary to go beyond them all to the Absolute Value (God) that specifies itself in them and therefore is characterized by them. C. Mazzantini (*The Metaphysical Horizon of the Philosophy of the Potential*) formulates a friendly difference of opinion with the editor's opening article, but with so many parentheses and footnotes that I have not been able to catch his contention. U. A. Padovani (*The Aristotelico-Thomist Metaphysic and Modern Thought*) contributes an outline of Aristotelianism and claims that in its Thomistic form it is superior to all modern systems by avoiding any tendency towards immanentism.

Among the usual reviews the two longest are of A. E. Taylor's *Does God Exist?* and D. M. Emmet's *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking.*

T. E. Jessop.

The Individual, the State, and World Government. By A. C. Ewing. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947. Pp. viii + 322.)

Dr. Ewing explains that his task in the present book is to see whether, as a philosopher, he can make some contribution towards the possible solution of certain great practical political problems of the present day—the problems of the State and the rights of the individual, of democracy, and of the prevention of war. Accordingly, after a brief introductory chapter, he deals first in Chapter II with the civil rights of the individual, e.g. the right of free speech, rights connected with family life, etc., and then in Chapter III with political rights, and the arguments for and against a democratic form of government. Chapter IV is concerned with the analysis of the concept of the State, and finally there is a long chapter on international government and the prevention of war. The book is designed as much for the general reader as for the professional philosopher. "I should be very sorry," the author remarks, "if it were read only by professional philosophers."

The first two chapters of the book raise some interesting problems. In the first chapter political philosophy is said to be "in the main, a branch of ethics," and shortly afterwards the author remarks that he assumes one thing, "namely, that some ethical judgements are true and others false, and that we are capable of deciding between them." To this assumption he attaches the greatest importance—"if this is not the case it is useless for me to write a syllable more." Nevertheless, little more is said about the assumption itself, and the student of philosophy, aware of present controversies in ethics, may feel that more should have been said. It has, however, to be remembered that this is a book designed to help the general reader in deciding practical political issues. Why, then, weary him with too much about presuppositions? That this reply is not altogether satisfactory may perhaps be seen in the second chapter, which is concerned with the rights of the individual. This begins with a discussion of general theories of rights, and then turns to particular rights—property, free speech, etc. The view that the individual has "any absolute positive rights" is rejected, as is the view that the individual has no rights except those that the State gives him, and the final choice is made to lie between a utilitarian view of rights and the view that the individual has natural rights which are not based merely on the general good, but these are not absolute, but only *prima facie.* Much of this argument is not easy. If the general reader is to follow it intelli-

gently, one feels he must have more clues as to the presuppositions involved, the precise issues at stake, and the method by which these issues might be settled. Rights at the outset are defined in terms of right—"powers or securities of a kind such that the individual can rightly demand of others that they should normally not interfere with them." This, however, does not in itself provide much guidance, since it is followed by the brief remark that right itself is indefinable, and in any case is a matter for general ethics; and the position seems to be further complicated by the footnote on p. 30 distinguishing three meanings of right, a point which occurs again in the discussion on p. 77. All this is, I think, simply to express a wish, which both general reader and philosopher may share, that Dr. Ewing in this chapter on Individual Rights had begun farther back and told us more about the bases from which political arguments begin and on which political judgements are made. This preliminary clearing of the ground seems most important; in this respect particularly the philosopher might well be able as a philosopher to help in political issues.

Space is not available for comment on the third chapter, where the arguments for and against democracy, most of them fairly familiar, are lucidly and concisely expressed. Comment on various points in the fourth chapter on the State, including an interesting discussion on whether one has any strong special obligation to one's own country, must also be omitted. It is, however, necessary to say something about the long final chapter, "International Government and the Prevention of War." This is an admirable piece of work. It begins with a discussion of the treatment of Germany distinguished by its clarity of analysis, and the wisdom and moderation of its conclusions. In the subsequent discussion of the international machinery which may secure peace the same qualities are apparent. In particular, the concise analysis of the difference between a league and a federation, and the comparison of the League of Nations with the San Francisco Charter, could in the space available hardly be bettered. Here philosopher and non-philosopher alike will find much to profit them.

I found few misprints. On p. 25, l. 19 "legislators" should perhaps be "legislatures"; on p. 61, l. 4 for "or" read "of"; on p. 172, last line, for "it" read "is," and on p. 179, l. 14 for "it" read "is." There is an excellent index.

R. C. Cross.

Science versus Idealism. By Maurice Cornforth. (London: Lawrence and Wishart. No date. Pp. 267. Price 12s. 6d.)

Mr. Cornforth is a Dialectical Materialist. His book is not, as the title might suggest, an examination of the relation between science and idealist philosophy or a defence of science against idealism. It is an attack on philosophers of the school of logical positivism and logical analysis, whom the author regards as disguised idealists. He takes it for granted that idealist philosophies arise to defend religion. Nothing of note is said about religion. It is assumed to be "a bad thing": and the reader who doubts this must presumably read his Marx and Engels. The Marxist standpoint sometimes obtrudes itself in the author's habit of quoting commonplace remarks of Engels and Lenin as though they were philosophically illuminating. Among the wilder Marxist interpretations is the assertion that Hume's logical atomism represents "the reflection in philosophical theory, of the economic position of the individual in capitalist society" (p. 256).

In spite of the Marxist bias, however, the book is well worth the attention of anyone interested in modern positivist movements. It is clear and intelligible on difficult problems. It is written in a fresh and lively style, if a little desultory, and contains some amusing remarks (e.g. the note on Mr. Drury's

toothache, p. 152, and the comparison, p. 157, of Carnap's amending Wittgenstein to Hume's amending Berkeley, with the comment that history repeats itself, "on the second occasion, as farce").

In a brief review I can only hope to outline the argument, including points of difficulty. Part I, consisting of Chapters 1–6, deals briefly with philosophical development from Bacon to Mach, regarded as a prelude to philosophical analysis. Bacon and Hobbes are out and out materialists; Locke is a confused materialist (maintaining both that knowledge is about our ideas and that material substance exists); Berkeley is the arch-criminal, the philosopher who reconciled science and religion by giving up the materialism of Bacon, Hobbes and Locke and developing a pure empiricism, on which the logical positivists have hardly "advanced a step" (p. 49). Although Hume did not "care a fig for religion" (p. 59) his philosophy is criticized for being compatible with religious faith. Kant is a more confused Locke, trying to reconcile idealism and materialism. Mach is a confused Hume, with a new terminology, in which "element" replaces "perception" and minds and bodies are different combinations of these "neutral" elements. There are three things wrong with pure empiricism: (1) The failure to realize that "we gain our knowledge by doing things" (p. 77) and not "by contemplating sensations" (p. 76), (2) the atomic view of experience, (3) the solipsism which follows from neglecting the co-operative nature of science.

Part II, the larger part of the work, deals with the logical positivists of to-day. In Chapter 7, "Logical Analysis as a Philosophical Method," an excellent account is given of Russell's "scientific" method in philosophy, which is found to be an amalgam of Descartes and Occam, yielding results already obtained by Mach and Berkeley. The analysis of the statements of common sense and science, practised by Moore, is criticized on the ground that it claims to give more ultimate knowledge than science. [The analytical philosophers would presumably reject this criticism by saying that to analyse propositions (or sentences) so as to reveal the ultimate elements of the facts they express was not the same as to obtain more ultimate knowledge. Mr. Cornforth might have done more to counter this claim.] Chapter 8, "Logical Atomism," treats the way in which Russell's analysis of propositions led on to Wittgenstein's doctrine of atomic facts, a doctrine which the author regards as an ungrounded *a priori* assertion, since no one has ever produced a proposition which states an atomic fact. Chapter 9, "The Philosophy of Wittgenstein," examines the views set out in the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*. Mr. Cornforth rightly perceives that the Verification Principle, in its simple form, is as hostile to materialism as to idealism. He objects to Wittgenstein's solipsism on the grounds that the solipsism of philosophers, though self-consistent, is "not consistent with the facts of their social life. We live in society. We take part in affairs, we are born, grow up, reach maturity, and die" (p. 160). Solipsism, then, is untrue because it conflicts with our knowledge of certain facts. Propositions are verified not by experience, but by action; and the action is co-operative action. "We verify whether our ideas about the world are right or wrong by changing the world in accordance with our ideas of it" (p. 161).

The truth of the Marxist doctrine lies no doubt partly in its insisting that experiment dominates observation in the advanced sciences, and that experiment is a social affair. But what verifies in experiment is still the observation which comes at the end; and Mr. Cornforth does not make clear the role of action in verification, which is the hub of Marxist epistemology. He instances my verifying that there is coal in the scuttle by (1) looking into the scuttle, (2) putting what I see there on the fire. But he omits to mention (3) looking

to see whether there are flames or not. Now (1) and (3) verify; (2) serves the purpose of putting me in a position quickly for (3). "Had we but world enough, and time" we might wait until a self-engendered conflagration reached the scuttle. If some live coals accidentally fell in the scuttle, verification would be effected without any action on my part.

Chapters 10, 11 and 12, "Logical Positivism," deal with doctrines of Carnap. The author attacks Carnap for excluding from all consideration in logical analysis the reference of words and sentences to a reality other than themselves; and hence making verification consist in comparing the statement awaiting verification with the "records" of scientists, the so-called protocol-statements, which need no justification themselves. As a good Marxist the author also rejects physicalism and the unity of science, on the ground that it fails to recognize that there is a hierarchy of organization in the material world. The history of purposive life, for instance, cannot be written in physical terms. [Is this Marxist doctrine really consistent with materialism?] In Chapter 12 there is an excursus on Time, in which the author argues that there is a sense of time in which it is meaningful to ask: "Did time have a beginning? If so, when did it begin?" But I have failed to follow the argument or to be convinced that the question is a reasonable one. Some very odd things are said about measurement. It is argued that because by using an elastic measuring-tape I can make two sides of a triangle together *not* greater than the third; therefore, they "are or are not greater than the third according to the method of measurement we adopt" (p. 210). Both views, the author implies, are equally true. [It would be as reasonable to argue that I can make twopence and twopence add up to threepence by stealing a penny.] The author's point is that contradictory statements about the world may result from the *choice* of different operational methods. One method is usually "better for most purposes" (p. 212). [But surely it *is* better because it is in accord with the facts. At least a different view wants more argument than it gets here.] There is an interesting, and I think sound, passage in which the author shows that Carnap's test for the meaningful character of statements—the possibility of translation from the material into the formal mode of speech—leaves metaphysical statements unscathed.

In Chapter 13, "The Interpretation of Science," the author takes logical positivism to task for making science consist in formulating predictive rules from the data of experience. The purpose of science, he urges, is control over nature, and this requires theory as well as rules. [The positivists *have* failed to account for the emphasis which the scientist lays on the distinction between empirical formulae and theory.] There is some robust sense on that old shibboleth, Occam's Razor: "In attaining to scientific knowledge, theory posits just those entities, and so many entities, as are known to exist and whose existence is verified" (p. 253).

The concluding chapter gives Mr. Cornforth's own account of philosophy as scientific materialism. So viewed philosophy has to show the connection of the sciences, their importance to man, and their provisional character. It has also problems of its own in the field of logic and epistemology. Presumably, moral philosophy and metaphysics are excluded as reflections of the economic scene, though this would leave the difference, for example, between the metaphysics of Bradley and Spencer inexplicable.

I have noticed the following misprints: p. 38, l. 4 *detail* for *detailed*; p. 80, l. 4 *word* for *world*; p. 92, l. 24 *racts* for *facts*; p. 219, l. 23 a comma appears instead of an *l* in the word *conclusions*; p. 245, note 1 *Wolfe* for *Wolf*; p. 246, l. 1 *Copernician* for *Copernican*; p. 247, l. 9 *Compte* for *Comte*.

WINSTON H. F. BARNES

The Limits of Science, Outline of Logic and the Methodology of the Exact Sciences. By the late Leon Chwistek, with an Introduction and Appendix by Helen Charlotte Brodie. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd. pp. lvii + 347. Price 30s.)

This is said to be the first book on philosophy which has been translated directly from Polish into English. As such it will be received with much interest. For the works of Lukasiewicz and Tarski which are accessible in German or English and the summary of Polish achievements in logic which was published during the war by Mr. Jordan in a series on Polish Science and Learning have established a high reputation for the Polish school of logicians. Unfortunately the reader's good will towards the book may not survive his reading of it.

The Polish original appeared in 1935. In 1938 an outline of the symbolic system which forms about half the book was published by Chwistek and his collaborator Hetper in the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* under the title "New Foundations for Formal Meta-mathematics." Although the present publication is for the most part a translation from the Polish of 1935, it contains some new material supplied by the author in English. Apparently he was in communication with the editress during the early stages of the preparation of the new edition but died before he could give final approval to the text. On the whole the English reads fairly well. But there are a few howlers such as the pseudo-Latin words "*formuli*" (pp. 230 and 273) and "*apparati*" (p. 266); and there are a number of references to Polish works on the history of philosophy which seem quite pointless in an English edition, since they deal with matters about which an English reader can inform himself much more easily elsewhere, e.g. Kant's views on formal logic (p. 105). It is also rather surprising that the statement about Albert the Great on page 101 was allowed to stand uncorrected; the passage of Prantl mentioned in the footnote shows that the reference should be to Albert of Saxony, who lived a hundred years later. The introduction and the appendix by Miss Brodie give some help towards an understanding of Chwistek's thought and also some indications of its shortcomings. The detached and critical tone of the introduction would, indeed, have seemed rather curious had the book been published during the lifetime of the author. If the whole work is disappointing, the fault does not lie with Miss Brodie or the American philosophers who helped her with advice.

In the first three and the last two chapters Chwistek deals with the need for logical analysis of the concepts of mathematics and the exact sciences. He finds anti-rationalism rampant in all quarters, and offers what he calls a method of "sound reason" for eliminating philosophical muddles. Since the other five chapters, which contain his symbolical system, are extremely difficult to follow, it is likely that many readers will base their opinion on what they read at the beginning and the end; and it is almost certain that they will come to the conclusion that Chwistek had a bad temper and a poor judgment. Every philosopher may be allowed one or two hates, but a philosopher who discovers anti-rationalism or idealism or worse in almost all his predecessors and contemporaries does not inspire confidence. Some offensive references to his Polish colleagues Lesniewski and Kotarbinski and several wild remarks about politics suggest that Chwistek was obsessed by local feuds. He obviously wanted to combine positivism with a Marxism freed from Hegelian relics, but nothing clear emerges from what he says about the limits of sound reason and the "problem of reality."

The symbolical system of the middle chapters has no very close connection with the rest. It is based on a discipline which Chwistek calls rational seman-

tics. This has nothing in common with the semantics of Tarski, but is rather a general theory of syntax considered as part of the study of arrangements. He starts with two marks, "*c*" and "*". The first of these he calls an expression (although it is, in fact, a mere mark without meaning), and the second he uses as a concatenation sign by means of which more complicated expressions can be constructed. Thus "**cc*" is an expression according to his explanations, and so too is "***ccc*." The first is the concatenation of two occurrences of "*c*," and the second is the concatenation of the expression so constructed with another occurrence of "*c*." It is clear that we can construct expressions *ad libitum* with these materials, and also that we can prove some quite general theorems about their relations. For the formulation of his theory Chwistek uses the notion of substitution, writing "(*EFGH*)" as an abbreviation for "*H* is the result of substituting *G* for *F* in *E*." Having developed the system some way in this abstract fashion, he then proceeds to introduce familiar symbols of formal logic and mathematics (e.g. numerals) as abbreviations for certain complex expressions. His selection of expressions to correspond to familiar symbols is, of course, not wholly arbitrary, since he intends these latter to retain their customary relations. There is, however, a good deal that is arbitrary in the establishment of correspondences, and the result is not a system of explanatory definitions, but rather a code which might help in the consideration of meta-mathematical questions such as those raised by Hilbert. Whether it can in fact be used to advantage remains to be seen.

Chwistek's exposition is extremely difficult to follow. At times he seems to glory in obscurity, as for example when he writes on page 95 of one relatively small difficulty "I see no reason for abandoning the notation of Lukasiewicz merely because the ordinary notation is more familiar. Symbolical language requires the elimination of so many habits that there is no reason to give the habit of using the ordinary method of notation special consideration." For my own part I confess that I have found his explanations insufficient to show what he is doing in certain parts of his book, but I have a strong suspicion that a good deal of what he says is vitiated by a failure to distinguish consistently between the use and the mention of symbols. When he writes on page 295 "If *E* and *F* are expressions **EF* is an expression," does he intend the capital letters to mark gaps where we can insert the *names of expressions* or rather gaps where we can insert *expressions* themselves? In a note on the next page he says that they are variables which can be replaced by expressions, but a little later he begins to make free use of the phrase "*H* is the result of substituting *G* for *F* in *E*" as though he were dealing with variable names of expressions. The difference is important. For it makes sense to say "'$\sqrt{3}$' is the result of substituting '3' for '2' in '$\sqrt{2}$'," but "$\sqrt{3}$ is the result of substituting 3 for 2 in $\sqrt{2}$" is just gibberish.

WILLIAM KNEALE.

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OBITUARY NOTICE

Alfred North Whitehead

The distinguished British philosopher, Professor Alfred North Whitehead, O.M., died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 30, 1947, at the age of eighty-six.

Whitehead was born at Ramsgate on February 15, 1861, the son of Canon Alfred Whitehead. He went to Sherborne and became in due course Captain of the School. In 1880 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1883 he was bracketed fourth Wrangler, and in the following year was placed in the first class of Part III of the Mathematical Tripos. He was elected a Fellow in the same year by his College, and later became Senior Mathematical Lecturer. In 1914, after spending a short time as lecturer in Applied Mathematics and Mechanics at University College, London, he was invited to become Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science. He held this post until 1924, when he accepted the Chair of Philosophy at Harvard. He and Mrs. Whitehead made America their second home, and spent many happy years there, surrounded by friends who both admired and loved them.

As is well known, Whitehead was the joint author with Bertrand Russell of *Principia Mathematica*, which appeared in three volumes between 1910 and 1913. This work holds a dominating position in the history both of logic and mathematics.

Whitehead gave much thought to education, and in 1929 his reflections were published in *The Aims of Education*. He also took a deep interest all his life in history, and papers on this subject appeared from time to time in various journals. A profound knowledge of history is revealed by his later philosophical books. As a mathematician he naturally gave much consideration to the theory of relativity, and in 1922 *The Principle of Relativity* gave an alternative rendering.

The last twenty years of Whitehead's life were largely given up to the adumbration of philosophic thought. First there appeared *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge*, shortly followed by *The Concept of Nature*. His philosophy was fully given in three later books, *Science and the Modern World*, *Process and Reality* and *Adventures of Ideas*, which portrayed the ultimate entities of nature as organic processes in which teleological as well as efficient causes play a part. Aspects of this "Organic Philosophy" were also dealt with in *Religion in the Making*, *Symbolism*, *The Function of Reason* and *Modes of Thought*. Since a number of articles on Whitehead's Philosophy have appeared in Philosophy during recent years, readers will be acquainted with his view that the universe is both a passage or *process*, and something that is permanent, both temporal and eternal, and that an adequate metaphysic must include as complementary facets of the universe both the realm of the actual and the realm of the ideal.

All who knew Whitehead are agreed that not only was he endowed with outstanding intellectual gifts, but that he also was blessed with the kindliest of natures and great charm. May Britain continue to produce similar sons from her genial soil.

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